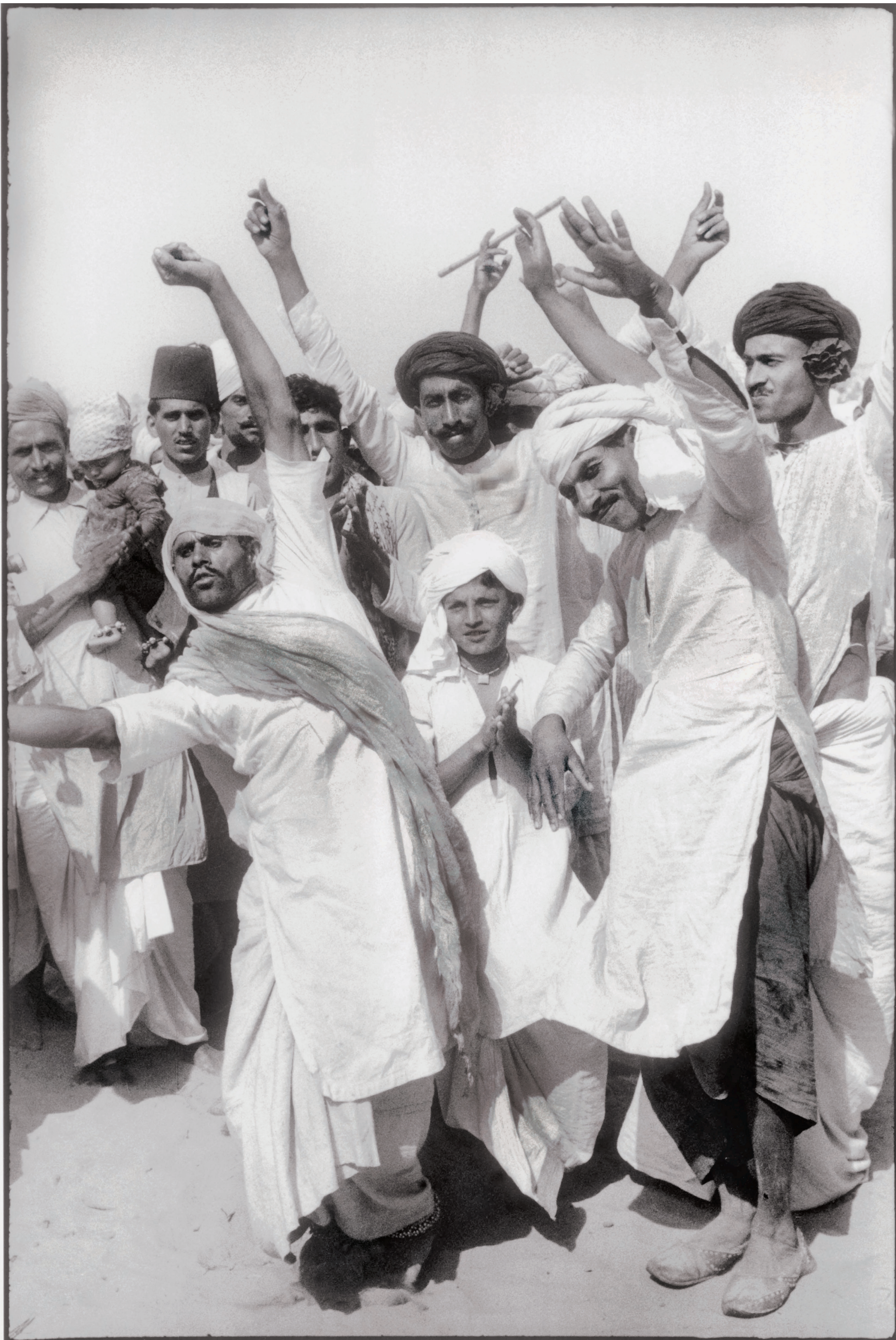


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THE FOREVER SHINING IDEA OF PAKISTAN

SHUJA NAWAZ asserts that repeated crises have led to a derailing of our constitutional order. Yet, a transformation driven by the youth may enable Pakistan to confront its formidable challenges.

THE idea of Pakistan today is not the idea that was created in the 1930s, or 1940s, or even 1947 in British India. It has evolved over time. Today, as the country turns 75 years old, the first Pakistanis in independent Pakistan are lucky to still be alive. The average life expectancy of Pakistan today is barely above 67 years, compared with 70 in neighbouring India and 73 in Bangladesh, once part of Pakistan.

Many Pakistanis born in the first year of independence may well have passed on. Yet, Pakistan survives against all odds and, if it makes the right choices, it could survive beyond the fears and prognostications of many inside and outside the country and meet the challenges of the 21st century. Some would say Pakistan's survival has been nothing short of a miracle, because the global map is forever changing.

As scholar Tanisha Fazal indicates in her seminal study entitled *State Death*, half the countries on the face of the earth in 1816 do not exist today. Nearer home, in the mid-1700s, just before the British incursions began in the area then loosely known as India, there were more than 20 independent and autonomous states and entities on the map of greater South Asia, encompassing portions of modern Afghanistan and Iran and geographic South Asia. Only a handful survive today. The rest have disappeared as a result of conquests or mergers.

This should serve as a warning to those in Pakistan who think that the state of Pakistan is immutable and not subject to the laws of change that confront every nation. It is not just because of invasion or occupation that countries disintegrate. The rot that weakens their structure starts within societies and polities. Disunity, indiscipline and selfish disregard for the common weal more often than not are the trigger for disintegration and disappearance of nations. There is no immunity, not even for God's chosen Land of the Pure.

URGE FOR FREEDOM

How did we get to where the Islamic Republic of Pakistan finds itself today? Let us go down memory lane and pause at some key milestones, so we cannot be accused of selective amnesia, a disease that sometimes appears to be endemic in the homeland and its leaders.

The bubbling urge for independence from British rule combined with the creation of representative government in British India arose in the early 20th century with an all-India conference of political parties in 1928. That conference was a response to a challenge from the British in the face of the boycott by Indian parties of the Simon Commission, composed entirely of Britishers, that was to examine the Government of India Act of 1919. The British alleged that the natives were incapable of coming up with a constitution on their own. The major parties took up that challenge.

The all-parties conference included the All-India Liberal Federation, All-India Muslim League, Sikh Central League and others. The conference, on May 19, 1928, constituted a committee to draft the Constitution. Some of the notable members of this committee were Motilal Nehru (chairman), Sir Ali Imam, Tej Bahadur Sapru and Subhas Chandra Bose. M.R. Jayakar and Annie Besant joined the committee later. Jawaharlal Nehru, Moti-

CAPTION FROM THE FRONT PAGE

A new optimism is apparent at the shrine of Chanan Pir, located approximately 50 kilometres outside Bahawalpur. The mood at the first urs after Independence and accession of Bahawalpur to Pakistan is festive.

Photo Credit: © Henri Cartier-Bresson Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson/Magnum Photos



Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah is seated with the Pakistan flag draped behind him in Karachi in December 1947. (Excerpted with permission from *Witness to Life and Freedom*, Roli Books, Delhi).

lal's son, was appointed the secretary.

The committee was given the brief "to consider and determine the principles of the Constitution of India along with the problem of communalism and issue of dominion status."

Their end-product, the Nehru Report, was a remarkably wide and deep document and indeed ended up serving as a template for the future 1950 Constitution of independent India. Among its notable features were: "a section on fundamental rights: the right to free expression and opinion, equality before the law, right to bear arms, freedom of conscience, free profession and propagation of religion. The most remarkable provision was the right to free and elementary education. The Report introduced a parliamentary system of government along with universal adult suffrage. On the communal question, the Report proposed reservation for Muslims in legislatures, however, these were restricted to only those constituencies where Muslims were in a minority. Also, there was no mention of separate electorates for Muslims."

The last point reflected a division between the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress and upended their earlier agreement under the Lucknow Pact of 1916.

After declaring that all citizens were equal, the draft constitution stated boldly: "There shall be no state religion for the Commonwealth of India or for any

province in the Commonwealth, nor shall the state either directly or indirectly endow any religion or give any preference or impose any disability on account of religious belief or religious status."

The divide between the successor states of India, that is Bharat as per the Indian Constitution, and Pakistan, the increasingly Islamist state, was being defined even then, though contemporary India appears now to be increasingly elevating Bharat (one who carries a light while searching for knowledge) above the secular India (the Grecian name for the Land Beyond the Indus) that its founders envisaged.

MUSLIM VIEWS

The Nehru Report that emerged from those deliberations led to a sharpening of Muslim views on preserving their cultural and political separateness, both as a majority in some provinces and as a minority in others.

These ideas took shape in the All-Parties Muslim Conference designed to coalesce the views of the different Muslim groups. This 1929 conference in Delhi, presided by the then Aga Khan, leader of the Ismaili sect of Shia Muslims, reflected the views of most of the Muslim groups, and presented their thoughts on what sort of a federal structure needed to emerge from the unitary colonial structure of British India. The key elements included: a federal system with total autonomy

and residuary powers for the constituent states; Muslims representatives elected through separate electorates; Muslims would have proportional electoral weightage in the Hindu-majority provinces and would extend the same privilege to non-Muslim minorities in Sindh, the then North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), and Balochistan; Muslims to have a proportionate share in the central and provincial cabinets; and Muslim majority would be maintained in all Muslim-majority provinces, especially in the then united Bengal and Punjab.

IQBAL'S PROPOSAL

A further cleavage between Congress and the Muslims of British India emerged with the active appearance of poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal who began to define the outlines of a federated state to succeed British India, in other words a Muslim state within a state.

In a rebuttal to the Nehru Report, he presented in his presidential address to the Muslim League meeting of 1930 the idea that "proper redistribution [of power] will make the question of joint and separate electorates automatically disappear from the constitutional controversy of India".

He saw the pluralism and diversity of India as a plus and a foundation to build a viable confederation. "The units of Indian society are not territorial as in European countries. India is a continent of human

groups belonging to different races, speaking different languages, and professing different religions. Their behaviour is not at all determined by a common race-consciousness. Even the Hindus do not form a homogeneous group."

He supported the resolution of the 1929 All-Parties Muslim Conference at Delhi that demanded "the creation of a Muslim India within India" and spelt out his prescient proposal for a new Muslim state:

"I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Balochistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India."

The Nehru Report had rejected this idea as being unwieldy so Iqbal proposed the possibility of sloughing off the Ambala Division of Punjab that did not have a majority Muslim population as well as some other districts that had a non-Muslim majority, to make the new entity less unwieldy.

He then went on to state forcefully: "India is the greatest Muslim country in the world. The life of Islam as a cultural force in the country very largely depends on its centralisation in a specified territory."

Should we imagine what he might have thought of the Radcliffe dissection of the Punjab leading to the bloody partition that Lord Mountbatten unleashed upon the subcontinent?

RAHMAT ALI'S IDEA

A riposte to the Iqbal proposals came from a Muslim student in the United Kingdom who put forward his idea in 1933 for a separate state called originally PAKSTAN (later spell-checked by others to become PAKISTAN). His pamphlet entitled *Now or Never* was written as "an appeal on behalf of the thirty million Muslims of PAKISTAN, who live in the five Northern Units of India — Punjab, North-West Frontier (Afghan) Province, Kashmir, Sindh and Balochistan. It embodies their demand for the recognition of their national status, as distinct from the other inhabitants of India, by the grant to Pakistan [not his original spelling] of a separate Federal Constitution on religious, social and historical grounds."

Rahmat Ali, who is credited with being the first to come up with the name 'Pakistan', argued: "India, constituted as it is at the present moment, is not the name of one single country; nor the home of one single nation. It is, in fact, the designation of a State created by the British for the first time in history. It includes peoples who have never previously formed part of the Indian nation at any period of its history, but who have, on the contrary, from the dawn of history till the advent of the British, possessed and retained distinct nationalities of their own.

One of such peoples is our own nation. In the five Northern Provinces of India, out of a total population of about forty million, we, the Muslims, constitute about thirty millions."

He then went on to enumerate the separation between Muslims and the majority Hindu population. "We do not inter-dine; we do not inter-marry. Our national customs and calendars, even our diet and dress are different."

The evolution of the idea of Pakistan as a separate nation within India was taking root and giving a new platform for Mohammad Ali Jinnah the "ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity" as he acquired the leadership of the Muslim League and began to forge a coalition of support for a separate homeland for Muslims. First inside India and then, as a second-best option it seems, outside India after Nehru became intransigent in recognising Muslim demands.

Rahmat Ali demurred and raised the ante for Jinnah by seeking the creation of not one but three Muslim homelands out of British India, Pakistan in the northwest,



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THE FOREVER SHINING IDEA OF PAKISTAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Osmanistan in the south (the erstwhile Hyderabad state) and Bangistan in Bengal.

Jinnah may well have agreed to this idea had it been practicable in his view, but he feared that the British would end up giving Muslims what he called “a truncated or mutilated, moth-eaten Pakistan” [text of Jinnah’s statement in New Delhi of May 4, 1947]. That is what, in fact, transpired. He got a country of two wings that was separated by a thousand miles of hostile India.

On the way to independence, Jinnah had to contend with the fractious Round Table Conferences of 1930-32 in London that further strengthened the view among the Indians that they needed to seek an autonomous dominion status. Then came the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 that was a last-minute British attempt to continue to have some control and influence over the defence and foreign relations of India.

It suggested groupings according to their communal roots and preferences, allowing both provinces and princely states to form groups within the Indian Union, that would have a legislature and executive, and significant autonomy. Both Congress and the Muslim League initially accepted the idea, but then Nehru said he did not approve the idea of religious groupings. This was a big factor in Jinnah’s decision to seek a separate state for the Muslims of India.

Did Jinnah, who now carried the title of Quaid-i-Azam, wish his Pakistan to be a homeland for Muslims to order their lives while protecting the rights of all sects and religions to practise their religion as they saw fit? Yes, if you go by his oft-quoted speech to the Constituent Assembly. In a speech loaded with homilies on many topics, including corruption, black marketeering, nepotism etc., Jinnah was firm in giving directions to the new state and its citizens:

“If you change your past and work together in a spirit that every one of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his colour, caste, or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make.”

‘YOU ARE FREE ...’

He emphasised that over time “the differences between the Hindu community and the Muslim community — and even within both communities between Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on, and among the Hindus between Brahmins, Vashnavas, Khattris, as well as regional identities such as Bengalees, Madrasis and so on — would vanish”.

He then issued his most quoted ruling for the fledgling state: “You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the State.”

But to other audiences on his campaign trail, his speeches had a narrower focus. He dropped hints of a state religion by emphasising the role of Islam in governance, eventually giving weight to the argument of the Islamists who began dismantling Jinnah’s Pakistan soon after his untimely demise barely a year after independence. (After supporting the idea of a global Muslim ummah and even emigration from Hindu-dominated India to the Muslim states to the West, the Jamaat-i-Islami leader Maulana Abul Ala Maududi had reluctantly begun to accept the concept of a Muslim nation-state.)

Jinnah was not to know that his new state would be transmogrified over time into a religious state and a security state. And his closest lieutenant Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan would banish the idealistic Rahmat Ali into exile and poverty in England, where even his initial burial expenses had to be borne by his alma mater, Cambridge University.

Jinnah definitely wanted to keep the military out of politics and cordoned off from Pakistani society, continuing the British model. Something that a couple of senior officers at the Staff College in Quetta said to him seems to have sparked his rebuke to those military men who wished to intrude into government.

He would have cringed to learn that those who ended up ruling Pakistan chose to ignore his ruling: “During my talks with one or two very high-ranking officers I discovered that they did not know the implications of the Oath taken by the troops of Pakistan. Of course, an oath is only a matter of form; what are more important are the true spirit and the heart. But it is an important form, and I would like to take the opportunity of refreshing your memory by reading the prescribed oath to you. ‘I solemnly affirm, in the presence of Almighty God, that I owe allegiance to the Constitution and Dominion of Pakistan [mark the words Constitution and the Government of the Dominion of Pakistan] and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully serve in the Dominion of Pakistan Forces and go within the terms of my enrolment wherever I may be ordered by air, land or sea and that I will observe and obey all commands of any officer set over me ...’”

In brief, the Quaid-i-Azam established civilian supremacy in the fledgling democracy that he helped carve out of British India. But he had bequeathed to Pakistan a weak elite group of ‘outsiders’ from northern India and Bengal as well as local feudals. Some of them had hoped their patrons in the British Indian Union would remain. And then there were the bureaucrats, who made alliances over time with different power groups to retain control over the machinery of state.

TREND OF MILITARY RULE

One emerging power group in the days after Jinnah’s death in 1948 was in the army, as ambitious officers who felt, among other things, that their political leadership had failed to prosecute the Kashmir War effectively, a war that some of them had orchestrated and even managed for the civilian leaders. They conspired to take control of the young state. Their coup attempt in 1951 was foiled but it prepared the ground for the first military dictator of Pakistan, General Mohammad Ayub Khan, to take over from the president of Pakistan in 1958. This set the trend for more military rulers, as the Constitution was set aside as needed, often with the aid of a compliant judiciary.

Thus emerged the Doctrine of Necessity, a judicial artefact to disguise the suborning of the Constitution by giving political and legal cover to military usurpers seeking legitimacy for their extra-constitutional usurpation of power.

Pakistan and Nigeria competed with each other in using the fig leaf of the Doctrine of Necessity. The current Article 6 of the Constitution of Pakistan, aimed



The poet-philosopher Iqbal in a contemplative mood at his home in Lahore. (Courtesy: Iqbal Academy)



Saeed Haroon, a *saalar* (commander) of the All-India Muslim League National Guard, leads a celebratory National Guard procession towards Boulton Market in Karachi in August 1947. (Courtesy: Seafield Collection)

at deterring usurpation of power, has not been an effective prophylactic against the continuous intrusion of ambitious military leaders in acquiring additional powers or intruding into civilian space.

The 1958 coup of Gen Ayub, the illegal appointment of Gen Yahya Khan as his successor in 1969, the forcible removal in 1999 of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif by a group of senior officer to prevent Sharif’s bizarre removal of Gen Pervez Musharraf as army chief while he was in the air on his way home from Sri Lanka; all these damaged the idea of Pakistan as a democracy.

‘SAME PAGE’ PHENOMENON

The absence of accountability in this regard has been glaring and has led to the creation of a parallel shadow government similar to that practised by the military Abri in Indonesia during the Suharto regime. The *Dwi Fungsi* approach that I wrote about in my book *Crossed Swords* and that Stanley Crouch has well covered in his writings is reflected in the often-cited explanation of civil-military unity of being ‘on the same page’. In fact, it remains a situation of being on the same page but in different books. The misalliance between the weak civil and the powerful military persists and continually weakens the state.

Parallel to the acquisition of greater power and stature by climbing up the ladder of the Warrant of Precedence (rank order of government officials), the military has taken or been gifted by weak-kneed civilian leaders a greater role in the economic and political life of Pakistan. An expanding culture of entitlement has facilitated wealth acquisition at the expense of the state, by both civil and military elites. UNDP estimates roughly \$17.4 billion of such ‘elite capture’, equal to 6pc of its GDP that is draining Pakistan’s struggling economy.

When accusations abound of double dipping by senior military officers, in terms of salaries and perquisites, by virtue of their rank and holding of parallel positions in the civilian sector or in state enterprises and subsidised ‘welfare’ organisations, they weaken the compact between the people and their army in Pakistan.

Public sharing of information on such perks and benefits and accounting in the public domain and within parliament would dull such criticism. Unfortunately, successive civilian governments have assisted in broadening these benefits to placate and corrupt the military and its top-tier leadership. Military leaders have helped the rot by accepting such benefits as their due.

A new wrinkle was the use for political purposes of selective extensions of service for military leaders that created further tensions within the services. Ending such behaviour, characterised by Mancur Olson as the work of “stationary bandits”, would remove a widening stain on the state elites and the armed forces, and restore their professionalism.

ISLAMISATION OF STATE

Finally, ritualisation of religion, and the Islamisation of the army, presented in the early days via the Objectives Resolution of the Constituent Assembly and later solidified by Gen Ziaul Haq, has become an ingrained system. This has been bolstered by the Islamisation of the educational curricula and even the history of Pakistan in Pakistani schools. In short, the ethos is being changed over time.

Meanwhile the rump of the state of Pakistan that came into being in 1947 today remains a fractured and imbalanced federation of unequal provinces in terms of economic and political power and population. Inter-provincial battles over dwindling resources, including water and power, and the emergence of disaffected youth in the periphery have created opportunities for hostile neighbours to attempt to weaken Pakistan.

The centrifugal forces seem to be edging out the centripetal forces that have held Pakistan together for 75 years. The unity, faith and discipline that Jinnah’s Pakistan was built upon will need to battle for survival against the forces of greed and division as represented in the kleptocracy and dynasticism in today’s Pakistan.

The misalliance between the civil and the military has been mirrored also in Pakistan’s external relations. Over time, Pakistan’s selfish leaders welded bonds with global powers in unequal agreements that allowed them to cede their national sovereignty in return for financial support and strengthening of their autocratic systems of rule. Political dynasties became the norm in religious and non-religious parties. Ironically, only the Jamaat-i-Islami appears to have some semblance of internal democracy.

Nationwide, democracy and economic development suffered, as a result. This has been the sad history of these first 75 years of Pakistan, a homeland built on the dreams and blood of millions who gave their all to move to the new state in 1947.

Yet, there are those that wish to take Pakistan into the competitive modern world before it reaches its first century. Among them are the youth of the country, especially the women of Pakistan, who have shown a resilience and a thirst for education that makes them world competitors.

Most of these cohorts were born in the last decade of the 20th century. If this youth cohort of 110 million and their elders together take a good hard look at the first 75 years of Pakistan, they may well strengthen its foundations as a modern and progressive state.

They face a host of challenges: elite capture, climate change and a rapidly deteriorating environment and depleting water resources, a weak educational system, hostile neighbours, and increasing global competition among superpowers, like China and the United States, that promises to engulf smaller countries.

Pakistan deserves to complete its first century of existence much higher on the global development scale and secure itself against all challenges from within and without. The counterfactual of a state further divided or erased from the atlases of the future is unimaginable and entirely unacceptable for everyone who knows the history of the freedom movement of Pakistan and wishes to make it a permanent monument to Iqbal, Rahmat Ali, Jinnah, and all the heroes who defined and defended the shining idea of Pakistan.

The writer was the first director of the South Asia Center at the Atlantic Council in Washington DC, January 2009 through October 2014. He is currently a Distinguished Fellow at the Center. He is the author of The Battle for Pakistan: The Bitter US Friendship and a Tough Neighbourhood (Penguin Random House, and Liberty Books, Pakistan 2019 and Rowman & Littlefield 2020), and Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army, and the Wars Within (Oxford University Press 2008 and 2017). www.shujanawaz.com

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING MR JINNAH



Lord Louis Mountbatten and Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah (left) during a quiet moment following the announcement of the Partition Plan in Delhi in June 1947. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (right), popularly known as the Frontier Gandhi, had a 100-minute interview on June 18 at Jinnah’s Residence at Number 10 Aurangzeb Road, New Delhi. Afterwards the Quaid-i-Azam said, “we had a free and frank talk”, signalling the process of dialogue along with the transfer of power would move forward. (Courtesy: National Archives)



By Ayesha Jalal

In one of the more unforgettable contemporary recollections of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Beverley Nichols in *Verdict on India* described the lanky and stylishly dressed barrister as the “most important man in Asia”. Looking every bit like a gentleman of Spain, of the old diplomatic school, the monocle wearing leader of the All-India Muslim League held a pivotal place in India’s future. “If Gandhi goes, there is Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Patel and a dozen others. But if Jinnah goes, who is there?” Without the Quaid-i-Azam to steer the course, the Muslim League was a divisive and potentially explosive force that “might run completely off the rails, and charge through India with fire and slaughter”; it might even “start another war”. As long as Jinnah was around, nothing disastrous was likely to happen and so, Nichols quipped, “a great deal hangs on the grey silk cord of that monocle”.

If the British journalist overstated Jinnah’s importance, he had put his finger on an essential piece of the sub-continental political puzzle on the eve of British decolonisation in India. Jinnah was a crucial link between the Congress and the Muslim League, which, if broken, could catapult India into disaster.

While regaling journalists at a tea party in his honour at Allahabad in April 1942, two years after the formal orchestration of the demand for Pakistan by the Muslim League, Jinnah had emphatically denied harbouring the “slightest ill-will” against Hindus or any other community. Charged with fomenting hatred and bigotry, he retorted: “I ... honestly believe that the day will come when not only Muslims but this great community of Hindus will also bless, if not during my lifetime, after I am dead, [in the] memory of my name.”

Drawing an analogy between himself and the first man to appear on the street with an umbrella, only to be laughed and scorned at by the crowd that had never seen an umbrella before, he said self assuredly, “You may laugh at me”, but time will soon come when “you will not only understand what the Umbrella is but ... use it to the advantage of everyone of you”.

Jinnah’s prediction that posterity would come to look kindly on the umbrella he had unfurled in the form of his demand for Pakistan remains unrealised. Confusing the end result with what he had been after all along, his admirers and detractors alike hold him responsible for dismembering the unity of India.

But, then, the Pakistan that emerged in 1947 was a mere shadow of what he had wanted. Let down by his own followers, outmanoeuvred by the Congress and squeezed by Britain’s last viceroy, Jinnah was made to accept a settlement he had rejected in 1944 and 1946.

His early death in September 1948 deprived Pakistan of a much needed steadying hand at the helm during an uncertain and perilous time. With no one of Jinnah’s stature and constitutional acumen around to read the riot act, constitutional propriety and strict adherence to the rule of law were early casualties of the withering struggle between the newly created centre and the provinces as well as the main institutions of the state.

Repeated suspensions of the democratic process by military regimes have ensured that even after seven decades of independence, Pakistanis are bitterly disagreed on the principles and practices of constitutional government as well as the sharing of rights and responsibilities between the state and the citizen. So, while there is no denying the centrality of Mohammad Ali Jinnah’s iconographic location in Pakistani national consciousness, there is a gaping chasm between the nationalist icon and the savvy politician.

Across the 1947 divide, clashing representations of Jinnah and his politics highlight the fissures in the Indian national imaginary. The unanimous rage that exploded as Indian nationalism, whether of the ‘secular’ or the ‘communal’ variety, in the wake of Jaswant Singh’s book on the Muslim League leader is evidence of Jinnah’s negative standing in the Indian psyche.

Left to an adoring following in Pakistan and equally impassioned detractors in India, the clearheaded lawyer who never missed a cue has been reduced to a jumble of contradictions that mostly cancel each other out. Jinnah’s demonization in the Indian nationalist pantheon as the communal monster who divided mother India contrasts with his positive representation in Pakistan as a revered son of Islam, even an esteemed religious leader (maulana), who strove to safeguard Muslim interests in India. Misleading representations of one of modern South Asia’s leading politicians might not have withstood the test of history if they did not serve the nationalist self-projections of both India and Pakistan.

Nations need heroes and Pakistanis have a right to be proud of their

greatest hero. But popular memories too need to be informed by some bare facts and meaningful ideas. Fed on improbable myths and the limitations of the great men’s approach to history, Pakistanis have been constrained from engaging in an informed and open debate on whether their country merits being called Jinnah’s Pakistan. Is Jinnah at all relevant to the current Pakistani predicament?

Even the most approximate answer requires training our sights on matters that most concern Pakistanis – rule of law and a balance between state institutions that is conducive to social justice, economic opportunities and peaceful coexistence. Fed on state sponsored national yarns about the past, Pakistanis are at a loss how to settle matters of national identity and the nature of the state – democratic or authoritarian, secular or Islamic.



The Quaid-i-Azam with his naval ADC, the future Admiral Syed Mohammad Ahsan, on his arrival in Karachi on August 7, 1947, to assume the reins of power. (Courtesy: National Archives)

The rise of Hindu majoritarianism in secular India and seemingly unending convulsions of religious bigotry amid state paralysis, if not compliance, in Islamic Pakistan is causing widespread dismay, confusion and disenchantment among a cross-section of citizens on both sides of the international border.

This is why reassessing the legacy of the man, who is universally held responsible for a partition that he had assiduously tried avoiding, is so necessary. But to do so meaningfully, one has to go beyond the simplistic distinction between the secular and the religious on which so many of the national myths of India and Pakistan are based.

There is no doubt that after the Muslim League’s election debacle in 1937, Jinnah made a conscious effort to display his Muslim identity. On key public occasions, he donned the sherwani – the traditional Muslim dress – rather than his well-tailored Western suits, and made more of an effort to appear as a mass politician. This was in some contrast to the days when his oratorical powers were restricted to the quiet of council chambers in the central legislature.

But the aloofness that characterised his earlier life did not give way

to a new-found affinity with the teeming multitude. A champion of mass education as the key to the democratisation and freedom of India, Jinnah lacked the populist touch of a Gandhi. Solitary in disposition, he used the distance between himself and his followers to command esteem and, most importantly, authority. Every bit the politician, Jinnah had a keen sense of timing and spectacle. Making the most of the adulation showered upon him by Muslims, he launched a powerful challenge against the Congress’s claim to speak on behalf of all Indians.

However, even while banding with segments of the Muslim ulema for political purposes, he remained to the core a constitutionalist with a distaste for rabble rousers who made cynical use of religion. He distanced himself from the humdrum of theological disputes about divinity, prophecy or ritual. “I know of no religion apart from human activity,” he had written to Gandhi on January 1, 1940, since it “provides a moral basis for all other activities”. Religion for him was meaningless if it did not mean identifying with the whole of mankind and “that I could not do unless I took part in politics”.

Jinnah’s expansive humanism is in stark contrast with the shocking disregard for the freedom of religious conscience in the country he created, a result of the political gamesmanship resorted to by authoritarian rulers and self-styled ideologues of Islam in post-colonial Pakistan.

In terms of his most deep-seated political values and objectives, Jinnah was remarkably consistent throughout his long and chequered political career. He had begun his journey as a Congressman seeking a share of power for Indians at the all-India centre.

Since Muslims were a minority in the limited system of representation in colonial India, he became an ardent champion of minority rights as a necessary step towards a Hindu-Muslim concordat and Congress-League cooperation. The provincial bias in British constitutional reforms after 1919 tested the resilience of a centralist politician with all-India ambitions.

As a constitutionalist of rare skill and vision, Jinnah tried reconciling communitarian and provincial interests while holding out an olive branch to the Congress. While his insistence on national status for Indian Muslims became absolute after 1940, the demand for a separate and sovereign state was open to negotiation until the late summer of 1946.

Jinnah was acutely aware that almost as many members of the Muslim nation would reside in Hindustan as in the specifically- Muslim homeland. The claim to nationhood was not an inevitable overture to completely separate statehood. An analytical distinction between a division of sovereignty within India and a partition of the provinces enables a precise understanding of the demand for a ‘Pakistan’. On achieving Pakistan, Jinnah was categorical that equal citizenship and an assurance of minority rights would form the basis of the new state.

The Quaid-i-Azam was checkmated at the end game of the Raj by the votaries of unitary and monolithic sovereignty. Yet his constitutional insights into the imperative of forging a new Indian union once the British relinquished power at the centre resonated well with a long South Asian political tradition of layered and shared sovereignties.

The four decades since the end of World War II were the heyday of indivisible sovereignty across the globe. Since the late 1980s there has been a perceptible weakening in the hold of that dogma. Jinnah’s legacy is especially pertinent to the enterprise of rethinking sovereignty in South Asia and beyond in the 21st century.

If Pakistan and India can shed the deadweight of the colonial inheritance of non-negotiable sovereignty and hard borders which has been at the root of so many of their animosities, a South Asian union may yet come into being under the capacious cover of Jinnah’s metaphorical umbrella.

His expectation that Hindus quite as much as Muslims would one day bless the memory of his name remains unfulfilled. But moves in that direction have been in evidence more recently. In 1999, the Indian prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, made a point of visiting the venue where the Lahore Resolution of 1940 was adopted by the Muslim League. This was followed in 2005 by Hindu nationalist leader Lal Krishna Advani’s homage to the founding father of Pakistan at his mausoleum in Karachi.

On the 141st birthday of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, it is worth recalling Bengali Congress leader Sarat Chandra Bose’s obituary comment, paying “tribute to the memory of one who was great as a lawyer, once great as a Congressman, great as a leader of Muslims, great as a world politician and diplomat and, greatest of all, as a man of action.”

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ARCHIVE

NOVEMBER 09, 2017

THE NAME — NOT THE PHILOSOPHY — LIVES ON



Allama Iqbal (left) during his visit in 1933 to the historic eighth century Grand Mosque of Cordova (Mezquita) in Andalusia, Spain. His eight-stanza poem, Masjid-e-Qurtuba, was inspired by Andalusia's Muslim heritage. (Courtesy: Iqbal Academy). The poet (right) in the courtyard of his Lahore house in the 1930s. (Courtesy: The Allama Iqbal Collection in the possession of Muneeb Iqbal)

By Khaled Ahmed

Pakistan's ideological journey has reshaped the great poet philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal into a patron of its hardening worldview. Reviewing how he has been 'reinterpreted' into an ideological platitude is now hazardous because of his state-approved and clerically-backed identity as an orthodox thinker opposed to all modernist revision. At times, secular commentators longing for an identity rollback consign him to the category of 'orthodox' while praising Sir Syed Ahmad Khan as the true modernist. There is, however, steady evidence from his life that defies this orthodox labeling.

The climactic moment in Iqbal's relationship with Pakistan came on December 25, 1986; some 48 years after his death. It happened during a national seminar presided over by General Ziaul Haq in Karachi on the birth anniversary of the founder of the state, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The topic of the seminar was, What is the Problem Number One of Pakistan? Present among the invitees was the son of Allama Iqbal, then a sitting judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. In his speech on the occasion, Justice Javed explained why his father was opposed to Hudood (Quranic punishments) which Gen Zia had promulgated in Pakistan.

The controversial phrasing from the Sixth Lecture in Allama Iqbal's book, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, was: "The Shariat values (Ahkam) resulting from this application (e.g. rules relating to penalties for crimes) are in a sense specific to that people; and since their observance is not an end in itself they cannot be strictly enforced in the case of future generations."

The reaction from Gen Zia was dismissive of Allama Iqbal rather than the Hudood he had imposed to appease his vast hinterland of clerical support. He had gotten into trouble with the clergy when his Federal Shariat Court decided that since stoning to death (Rijm) was not mentioned in the Quran it could not be a Hadd, that is, a punishment in the Penal Code. He had to change the Court to retain Rijm.

But Iqbal was prophetic: Pakistan has not stoned a single woman to death despite Rijm being on the statute book, nor has it been able to chop off hands for stealing. More literalist Iran gave up the ghastly practice of Rijm in 2014.

Pakistan is disturbed today by the continuing practice of bank interest after the Federal Shariat Court banned it in 1991 as Riba (usury) specifically mentioned in the Quran as also by Aristotle in his Nicomachian Ethic. Islamic banking which actually excludes the taking of Riba does so under a policy of complex self-confessed Heela (subterfuge).

In his publication *Ilmul Iqtisad* (1904), Iqbal's first book in Urdu as an introduction to how a modern economy worked, he explained and clearly accepted bank interest as the lifeblood of commerce, knowing that it was considered banned by the clerics and accounted for so few Muslims in India's commercial sector. He did so by accepting Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's view that "interest-banking was not the same as Riba/usury".

HUDOOD AND IJTIHAD

Iqbal couldn't have found approval in the Pakistan of today, much like Jinnah himself after he declared his preference for the Lockean state on August 11, 1947. To extend the argument, Iqbal was also opposed to the Fiqh (case law) favouring the Law of Evidence that discriminated against women and the non-Muslim citizens of the state. That he was unhappy with and scared of the traditionalist Ulema is testified by his arguments in the Lectures; there is also evidence that he inclined to a 'liberal' version of Islam in the new state.

Towards the end of his life he was collecting material to write on

Fiqh and had been corresponding with the traditionalist Ulema to elucidate points that he presumably wanted discussed in his new work. He was not a trained scholar (Aalim) and was not accepted as such by the Ulema, but he thought himself qualified to produce a work of Ijtihad (reinterpretation). His son, the late Justice Javed Iqbal, wrote: "The Jinnah-Iqbal correspondence, discussing shariah, points to the establishment of a state based on Islam's welfare legislation; it does not propose that in the new state any laws pertaining to cutting of the hands (for theft) and stoning to death (for fornication) would be enforced."

According to Javed Iqbal's biography of Allama Iqbal, *Zindarood* (1989), Allama Iqbal read his first thesis on Ijtihad in December 1924 at the Habibiya Hall of Islamia College, Lahore. The reaction from the traditionalist Ulema was immediate: he was declared Kafir (non-believer) for the new thoughts expressed in the paper. Maulavi Abu Muhammad Didar Ali actually handed down a Fatwa (edict) of his apostasy. In a letter written to a friend, Iqbal opined that the Ulema had deserted the movement started by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and were now under the influence of the Khilafat Committee from which he (Iqbal) had resigned.

Allama Iqbal's intent in reinterpreting Hudood becomes clear when he quotes Maulana Shibli Numani, who had written *Seerat-un-Nabi*, his renowned multi-volume biography of the Holy Prophet: "It is therefore a good method to pay regard to the habits of society while considering punishments so that the generations that come after the times of the Imam are not treated harshly."

LIKE NO OTHER

Allama Iqbal was a prodigy. In 1885, he stood first in grade one in Scotch Mission School, Sialkot, and began to be tutored in Persian and Arabic in a mosque. He was in class nine when as a teenager he started writing his juvenile poetry in Urdu. He passed matriculation in first division, winning a medal with scholarship. In his first year at Scotch Mission College, he started versifying under the pen-name of Iqbal and was published in literary journals.

He passed his BA exam in first division and won medals in Arabic and English. Three years later, though he passed his MA Philosophy in third division, he was the only one who passed and received the gold medal. He was appointed professor of Philosophy at the Government College, Lahore, chosen by Professor Thomas Arnold – the British orientalist who wrote a book proving that Islam was spread in the subcontinent not by the sword but by humanist preaching – who became his patron.

Iqbal was additionally appointed as the Macleod Arabic Reader at Oriental College, Lahore, on a monthly salary of 72 rupees and one anna. Later, he took time off from Oriental College to teach English at the Government College. His poems had started showing influence from Spinoza, Hegel, Goethe, Ghalib, Bedil, Emerson, Longfellow and Wordsworth.

He couldn't disagree with Sir Syed Ahmad Khan whom he regarded as the Baruch Spinoza (d.1677) of Islam, rationalising and demystifying the scriptures. His job description at Oriental College included the teaching of Economics to the students of the Bachelor of Oriental Learning in Urdu, and translating into Urdu works from English and Arabic.

PIONEER OF SEPARATION

Lahore lionised Iqbal as the thinker poet of the city who could spellbind in a Mushaira while publishing erudite papers on such mystics as al-Jili whose concept of Insan al-Kamil was reborn in him with the help of Nietzsche and his 'superman' and 'will to power' but without Nietzsche's rejection of morality – his "not goodness but strength" slogan. This was before he went to Europe (1905-08) doing his Master's and Bar at Cambridge and his PhD with his thesis, 'The Evolution of Metaphysics in Iran' at the Munich University, becom-

ing unbelievably proficient in German within three months.

The period 1908-25, back in Lahore, saw him produce some of his Urdu masterpieces while practicing law at the Lahore High Court. Reacting to Hindu revivalist movements, he journeyed from his pluralist view of India to a 'preservative posture, advocating separate electorates and developing the first geographical map of 'separation' of the Muslim community in the northeast and the southeast within the subcontinent. All-India Muslim League courted him as the leading Muslim genius and listened to his 'separatist' thesis at its Allahabad session in 1930.

He contended that his idea of an autonomous Muslim state was not original but had been derived from the Arya Samaj Hindu revivalist vision of Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab who first recommended 'separating' the Muslims. The view he put forward in his address remained pluralist which Pakistan neglected in 1949: "... [N] or should the Hindus fear that the creation of autonomous Muslim states will mean the introduction of a kind of religious rule in such states".

As for Iqbal's Nietzschean yearning for self-empowerment, Jinnah was made a practical example of it, as noted oddly by none other than Saadat Hasan Manto in one of his sketches.

Jinnah said this at the 1937 Lucknow session of the League: "It does not require political wisdom to realise that all safeguards and settlements would be a scrap of paper, unless they are backed up by power. Politics means power and not relying only on cries of justice or fair-play or goodwill." It was this separate empowerment of Muslims in the face of such Hindu revivalist movements as Shuddhi (purification) and Sangathan (unification) that made Iqbal disagree with the Deobandi scholar Husain Ahmad Madani over the idea of India as a nation-state where Muslims and Hindus would live as one nation.

Like Lala Lajpat Rai, another Indian genius, Dr B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of India's constitution, wanted Muslims to be given a separate state and wrote his book *Thoughts on Pakistan* (1941) which was welcomed by Jinnah who then asked everyone to read it to legitimise the League's campaign for Pakistan.

ON THE SAME PAGE WITH JINNAH

Iqbal's legally trained mind and his ability to write scholarly tracts quite apart from his ability to write the long poem or masnavi – abandoned by most poets of note after him – qualified him for all the three Round Table Conferences in London to present the case of the Muslims. His Allahabad address at the All-India Muslim League conference in 1930 was actually a learned survey of the nature of the modern state as imagined by such Western philosophers as Rousseau and could not have been comprehended by most Muslim Leaguers still basking in the afterglow of a doomed Khilafat Movement.

Noting that Pakistan's non-Muslims observe the Independence Day of Pakistan three days earlier, *Dawn* editorialised on August 11, 2017, on how Pakistan first tried to suppress, then set aside, the August 11, 1947, message of the Quaid-i-Azam at the Constituent Assembly: "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed. That has nothing to do with the business of the state."

It is not only the founder of the state, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, that Pakistan has set aside; it is also the philosopher of the state, Allama Mohammad Iqbal, who has been rejected. Seventy years after its foundation, the state is malfunctioning and religion is a major cause of the shifting of its writ to the non-state actors. Denigrated are human rights – of the minorities and women – on the basis of a coercive interpretation of religion. So much so, that the faith-based but unexamined constitutional provisions in Articles 62/63 have finally destabilised governance by causing conflict between state institutions.

The writer is Consulting Editor at Newsweek Pakistan.

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OCTOBER 16, 2017

THE MAN JINNAH CALLED HIS RIGHT ARM



All-India Muslim League leaders Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan at the India Office in London on December 3, 1946, during a visit to the United Kingdom to call on Prime Minister Clement Attlee and meet with Congress Leader Jawaharlal Nehru. (Courtesy: Dr Ghulam Nabi Kazi Collection)

By Roger D. Long

Liaquat Ali Khan, one of the heroes of the Pakistan Movement, was the builder of the nation in its nascent years. The Pakistan of 2017 — on the 70th anniversary of its independence — is in many ways Liaquat's creation as he established most of the policies Pakistan follows today. Liaquat had been a devoted follower of the Quaid-i-Azam, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, since 1928, and was appointed general secretary of the All India Muslim League by his leader in 1936. Over the subsequent 12 years, Jinnah and Liaquat developed a close working relationship, with Jinnah calling Liaquat “my right hand” in 1943, and appointing him prime minister in 1947. He held the position with great skill and distinction until he was assassinated on October 16, 1951. Liaquat was a reserved, outwardly calm person. Although he was not a demonstrative figure who craved attention and an audience, he was a skilled politician whom his political opponents often underestimated, as did the Congress Party, to their own cost. Besides, he worked in the shadow of the Quaid, who did not allow others to be the public spokesman for the League after 1936, or for Pakistan between August 14, 1947, and his death. Liaquat greatly admired Jinnah for his devotion to the cause of the Muslims. It was a devotion Liaquat shared and respected. He was always deferential to Jinnah in part because Jinnah always demanded deference from his followers, and in part because Liaquat always respected the almost 20-year difference in age between them. But Jinnah truly depended on Liaquat, who was at the centre of all the League's activities before partition and as prime minister.

Liaquat was an Urdu-speaking Punjabi, the second son of the Nawab of Karnal. He was educated in law at Syed Ahmed Khan's Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College, which later became the Aligarh University, and he remained devoted all his life to the modernist ideals and the integration of Western and Islamic learning he acquired there. He was a very good student and became a well-educated, well-travelled person who could, and did, conduct himself well during conversations of intellectual and ethical nature, as Viceroy Lord Wavell recorded in his journal.

Liaquat was married to his first cousin in 1915 and had a son, Wilayat, born in 1919, the year after his father died leaving him an independently wealthy man. Liaquat then studied law at Exeter College, Oxford, and the Inner Temple, London. He was called to the Bar and returned to India in 1922 after touring Europe as a well educated, cosmopolitan man, who could recite Iqbal's Jawab-i-Shikwa by heart, was fond of entertaining and music, and whose passion was politics.

He was also passionate about education and, among other things, he became the president and benefactor of the Anglo-Islamic School in Muzaffarnagar, United Provinces; president of the Anglo-Arabic College, Delhi (now Zakir Husain Delhi College); and he maintained a connection with Aligarh until 1947. As prime minister he continued his strong interest in education and spoke of its importance frequently.

He registered to practice law in Lahore after his return from England, but devoted his life to education and politics. In 1923 he ran for election to the Legislative Assembly of India from the Punjab, but was defeated. It was, thus, an accident of history that left him associated with the United Provinces and not the Punjab to which he belonged. According to Dr. Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah, a Bengali who knew him well and whose husband served as Liaquat's foreign secretary, he was “very much a Punjabi”.

Liaquat was elected to the Legislative Council in the United Provinces in 1926 and for 20 years represented the province; first at Lucknow and then, from 1941, in Delhi, where he joined Jinnah in the Legisla-

tive Assembly of India. Jinnah appointed him the Muslim League deputy leader. He had always been interested in economic affairs, spoke frequently on the subject in the United Provinces' legislatures and in the Legislative Assembly of India in New Delhi, served as one of the Indo-British trade negotiators in 1937, and was the first Indian Finance Member of British India in the interim government between September 1946 and partition.

Liaquat had a legalistic bent of mind and he was a detail-oriented person capable of long hours of work. Temperamentally he was ideally suited to be the general secretary of the League, and all its committees — such as the Working Committee and the Committee of Action — revolved around him. He was also responsible for the provincial League parties, maintained voluminous correspondence, and frequently travelled throughout the subcontinent for the League. It was remarkable that the League became a well-organised, national political party just in the space of a few years due to Jinnah's leadership and Liaquat's organisational ability.

Of critical value was Liaquat's role in the creation of *Dawn* as a weekly newspaper in 1941 and as a daily, the following year. *Dawn* played a major role in publicising and popularising the demand for Pakistan, and in the elevation of Jinnah as a national and even international figure.

Carrying the newspaper became a sign that one was a follower of Jinnah and a supporter of the demand for Pakistan. Indeed, *Dawn* was a catalyst for the creation of Pakistan.

The founding of Pakistan in 1947 was the great achievement of the Quaid-i-Azam, but he could not have done it without the help of a number of leading supporters, of whom Liaquat was the most important. But Liaquat also had another great achievement in his life, and that was the establishment of Pakistan as a working state entity and the development of its policies, most of which have been followed since 1947.

In 1947 both British and Indian leaders were talking about the possibility of Pakistan soon collapsing “like a tent”, openly discussing how many weeks or months Pakistan would last. It was Liaquat's historical achievement that by the end of his prime minister ship in October 1951 no one was talking about Pakistan's imminent collapse.

In 1947, Pakistan needed to create a state apparatus from scratch while absorbing millions of refugees, and fighting with India over Kashmir. In addition to ensuring Pakistan's survival and the creation of government institutions, such as the civil service and the military, Liaquat was responsible for creating Pakistan's national policies and 70 years later they have mostly remained intact.

The cornerstone of these policies was the stabilisation of the economy along sound fiscal lines while aligning it with capitalist trends in the West rather than with the communist bloc dominated by the erstwhile Soviet Union. Pakistan had little choice at the time though. Turning to the Soviet Union for assistance was not much of an option as its economy had all but been destroyed during the War and its preoccupation with Cold War issues was not much of a help either. While the West in the end provided little economic support, Pakistan's industrial development in the 1950s and '60s was actually a result of Liaquat's early policies.

In addition to the economic policy, Liaquat also established Pakistan's foreign policy, which the country has largely followed ever since.

The first feature of this policy was in regard to India and the conflict over Kashmir. Liaquat never agreed to accept the Vale of Kashmir as part of India, a policy that has characterised Pakistan's stance to date. Liaquat made a huge effort in India, England, and in Pakistan, trying to force India to agree to binding international arbitration over Kashmir. Even though he was not successful, his views on Kashmir have been propounded by all who have followed him since.

The same has been the case with the policy of alliance with the West. As with the orientation of its economy, Pakistan had little choice in the matter. In 1947, the Soviet Union was busy draining its East European allies of their assets to build up its own industries. Allying with a state based on godless communism was also unacceptable, and had Pakistan done so it would have been isolated diplomatically by the West at a time when it desperately needed its support. As a member of the Baghdad Pact between 1955 and 1979, as a frontline state in the war in Afghanistan after 1979, and again, as an ally in the war on terror in the post-9/11 world, Pakistan has followed the alignment set by Liaquat. It is only recently that Pakistan has started trying to develop meaningful ties with China.

The third main feature of Pakistan's foreign policy is its relationship with its Muslim confreres in the Middle East. Before partition, Jinnah had declared that Pakistan would be a friend of the West but oriented toward the Muslim Middle East. Liaquat sought good relations with all the Muslim countries, including Iran, which was the first country in the world to recognise the new state, and he welcomed the Shah of Iran to Pakistan in March 1950; the first head of state to visit the country. In the 1970s and '80s Pakistan emphasised its Middle Eastern connections; in 2017 the country looks increasingly for assistance from the Middle East and seeks to play a significant role in military affairs in the region.

Finally, with regard to its form of government, Pakistan continues to follow the path set for it by Liaquat. He had always been committed to a democratic political system and sought to create Pakistan as a parliamentary democracy in line with the Westminster model. But this had to be done while recognising and honouring Muslim feelings. These included the recognition that Islam is central to Pakistani life and its political system. Liaquat did this in the Objectives Resolution of March 12, 1949, when he started the process of creating a constitution which set up a parliamentary system but one that respected the sensibilities of the religiously-inspired. The Resolution, although amended, is part of the Pakistan Constitution under Article 2(A).

Liaquat was a son of Aligarh and a devoted follower of its founder, Syed Ahmed Khan, and that explains his modernist philosophy of integrating Western and modernist Islamic learning toward creating an advanced society based on both. Socially liberal, he fully supported women's education and the activities of his second wife, the dynamic and remarkable Rana Liaquat Ali Khan, who founded the All-Pakistan Women's Association in 1949.

From the creation of a modern military, a diplomatic service, foreign policy and diplomatic relationships, to the establishment of an educational system, a civil service, a state bank, and an entire economy, Liaquat was at the centre of all these activities and the inspiration for many of them. He believed he would have the time to write and promulgate a constitution, and convert the Muslim League into a well-organised and vibrant party as he had done for its All-India version in the years before 1947. Besides, he was also keen on establishing respect for all sects and creeds and viewpoints. When he was assassinated, he was only 56. Had he been the prime minister for another, say, 10 years or so, Pakistan would have developed more along the principles of the ideal liberal Muslim democracy envisioned by the Quaid-i-Azam and by his “right hand”, Liaquat Ali Khan.

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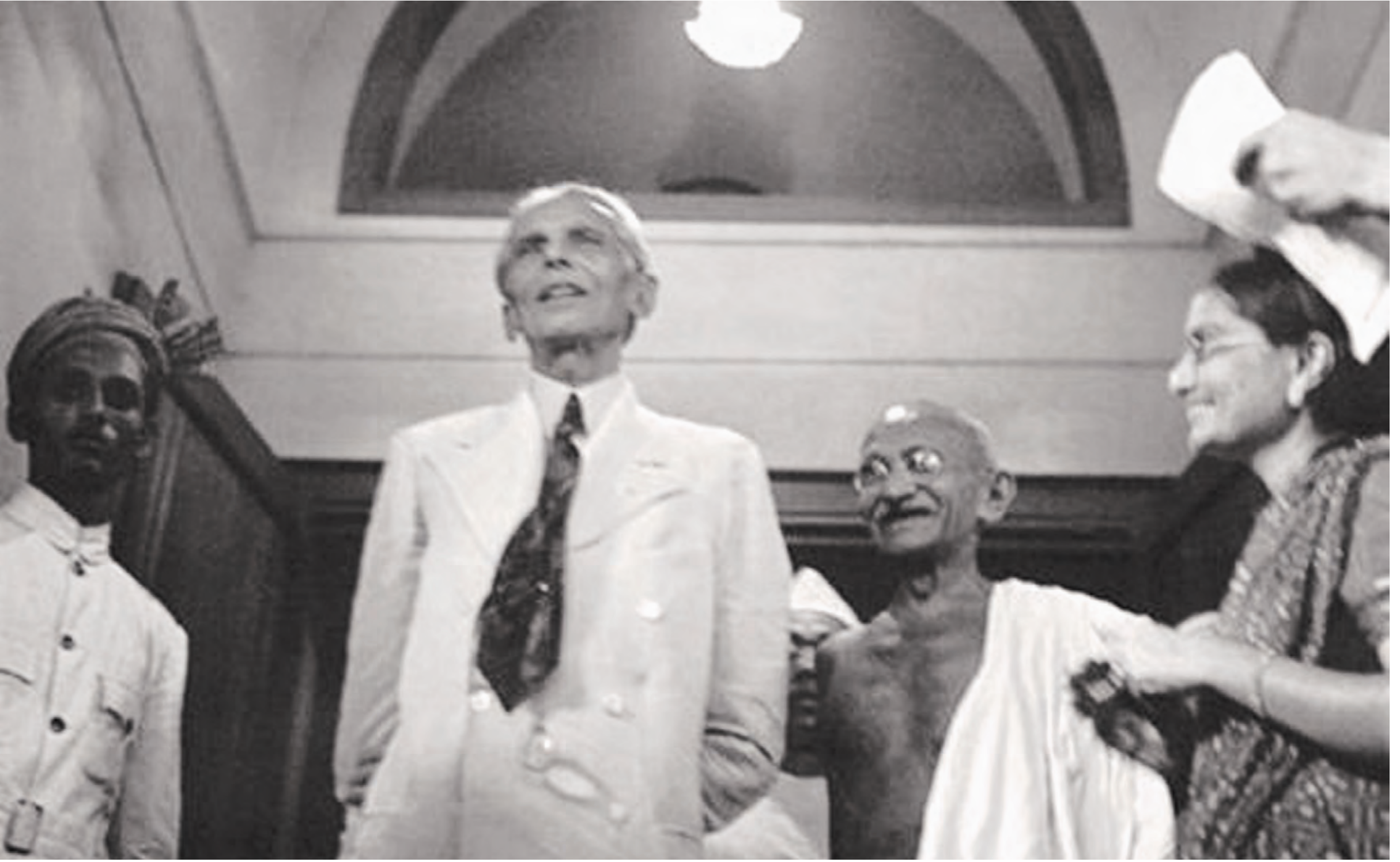


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THE INDIAN MUSLIM DILEMMA

JAWED NAQVI explores the post-1947 dilemmas present in the minds of India’s Muslims today and ironically wonders as to what Jinnah, Gandhi and Nehru would have thought of them today.



Gandhi visits Mohammad Ali Jinnah at his Malabar Hill Residence in Bombay in September 1944 in an attempt to resume the aborted Congress-Muslim League dialogue. (Courtesy: National Archives)

SUPPOSE in the 75th year of independence the founders of Pakistan and India happened to be around. It wouldn’t be surprising if Mohammad Ali Jinnah patted himself on the back for the prescience with which he had foreseen the rise of Narendra Modi as India’s ruler. But his sense of elation at correctly calling the future would abandon him just as soon because his own country had lost its foundational purpose, too, shortly after coming into being.

What would Jawaharlal Nehru or Mahatma Gandhi have made of the anniversary? Gandhi would have seen his killers being deified in a strange new India he could not recognise, and a contrite Nehru would be searching for words to say mea culpa to his fellow pandits from Kashmir and Muslim compatriots, too, for the hell their lives have become.

It is in the logic of their evolution in the 75 years as independent sovereign entities that India is being governed by Narendra Modi, while Pakistan’s democratic destiny continues to hang by the proverbial thread. There is a consolation for Pakistan if it helps. Its masses never really elected a Modi as their leader, which is not to say that they did not have their Modi moment. After all there must be a good reason that General Ziaul Haq is seen as an inspiration for India’s Hindu right as Modi tightens control over a fabled democracy.

It needs to be placed on record that before the sharp right turn in 2014, Indian Muslims carried a swagger on a par with other Indians. They may have lacked the dapper trappings of their Pakistani cousins, as did most other Indians, but they cared little about it. Gunnar Myrdal described Pakistani diplomats as more convivial than their Indian colleagues, and said they displayed a superior ability to raise the elbow at diplomatic conclaves.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s *awami* suit was eons away. The nattily dressed middle classes emulated Jinnah’s picky dress code. Indians did not mind that. They did not have to go to the extreme of adopting Gandhi’s loincloth, but seemed content with Nehru’s description of the Gandhi cap as a livery of freedom. The brighter intellectuals became known as *jholawalas* after the cloth bag they wore with their coarsely woven cotton attire.

Conversations in Muslim families fawned over their Pakistani cousins for being more westernised. But it was also not unusual for Muslims in India to regard their cross-border aunts and uncles and cousins who visited in summer holidays as parvenu consumerists who accepted a Faustian bargain with Ayub Khan’s military rule.

A wizened lady returned from Karachi after a longish family wedding and seldom forgot to mention the ubiquitous new Lux soap bar she saw being placed on the washbasin in every home she visited. For Indians this was an invaluable insight not least as their own Spartan ways were inspired by Gandhi. It was not uncommon for Indians, for example, to use the soap bar till it disappeared in their palms. It is true their country was chaotic in its egalitarian promise. But its political culture saw the narrowest social back lanes opening into the grand vista of a singularly grand democracy. Frugality blended with morality. Food would not be left on the plate to honour the memory of India’s Bengali compatriots who had faced the world’s worst famine. Secularism was not discussed; it was taken for granted.

Babu Mistri the mechanic who repaired colonial-era old crows in Lucknow had returned from Karachi where he found himself not fitting with the cultural mélange on offer. A kindly Hindu lawyer got him a stay order from a Lucknow court against deportation, and he lived cheerfully in India until he gave up his mortal coils in an ancestral home abutting the old quarter of Lucknow. Shyam Benegal’s Mammo would face the heat of suspicion years later while trying to extend her visa in India. Indira Gandhi would have frowned. She took particular care to open the doors to needy Pakistanis. Poetess Fahmida Riaz and dissident journalist Salamat Ali, to name two, escaped Zia’s ideological terror and Mrs Gandhi arranged for their warm welcome in Delhi.

LIFE DURING WARTIME

dul Hamid became handy in this regard. It was invoked in the Ayub-Shastri stalemate and helped create an aura of nationalism in which a Muslim soldier was projected as single-handedly thwarting Pakistani armour with goodness knows bare hands or rudimentary grenades or what. The kohl-eyed image of the fallen soldier ensured a safe passage for the country’s largest and relatively secure minority community through conflicts that otherwise came with emotional watermarks embossed by partition.

It was not uncommon for Muslims to transgress the limits of free speech, usually with light-hearted gossip without incurring costs. “*Bhagya*, Ayub Khan says he will offer the next Friday prayers, God willing, at Delhi’s Jama Masjid.” Nazir Khan Sahib, who shared the popular unverified reference from 1965 with my brother, was the driver of our Ford Prefect and came with a fabled attitude.

He was both an addict and author of bad Urdu poetry and was prone to carrying common canards from his perch at the Meraj Hotel, a hole-in-the-wall tea shop at old Lucknow’s Gwynn Road roundabout. On offer were delicious kebabs and *tava* parathas, heavily subsidised by the owner for C-grade poets and their fawning audiences that made Meraj Hotel an institution. Nazir was a celebrity of sorts at the gatherings. There was a law against tuning into Radio Pakistan, which he violated freely. When he went to jail, it was about a woman, not for falling short of his quota of nationalism.

On a larger canvas, it is thus tempting to see Pakistan and India as products of their Cartesian imagination. They thought and they became. There was little original here by way of input. A prototype was ready in colonial Middle East when a 1917 British declaration promised a legalistic framework for a new experiment in nation-building by partitioning people on the basis of religion and ethnicity, the scapegoat being Palestine.

In Ireland, too, a vivisection of its society was given legal imprimatur with a formal pact as early as 1921. The Anglo-Saxon idea of religion shoring up the new nation-state got a further boost when influential voices, like Joseph Stalin’s, for example, stepped in to give an intellectual cover to the making of Pakistan. His fulminations prompted Indian partisans to applaud Jinnah’s bold quest.

Stalin’s definition of a nation, in which he saw Pakistan fitting in snugly as a viable sovereign state, spurred Tahira Mazhar Ali Khan to ride her bicycle to the Quaid’s home with the good news that her party backed him. That Jinnah received the tidings with a smirk, which he reserved for leftists among his other quarries, made for an absorbing story among many one would hear from Tahira Apa.

Winston Churchill’s ‘sinews of peace’ speech, also known as his ‘iron curtain’ ruminations, was delivered in mid-1946, and expectedly cast a shadow on South Asia as it did elsewhere. The compulsions of Nehru’s intriguing affair with the British Commonwealth found him doing its bidding without demur. The first major enterprise was the toppling of the world’s first democratically elected communist government in Kerala.

Ayub Khan may or may not have shared Jinnah’s vision for a secular Pakistan in which Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in a religious sense but in their political lives. He, however, did show a preference for the founder’s spontaneous anti-communism, which he harnessed to the Cold War’s requirements of a sure-footed ally in Pakistan. Friends and families of Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Sajjad Zaheer are around to tell us more about that.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARTITION

ter, a job he thought he deserved, not unjustifiably, for all the hard work he did rousing sectarian passions among a largely inert community. His protégé during the Ayodhya march is currently reaping the harvest of Advani’s miscued praise for Jinnah. The former strongman of the Hindu right was cancelled from the race like an athlete failing a drug test.

While the ‘who’ of partition has been excavated and studied by scholars and commented on by early Congress critics like Ram Manohar Lohia, the ‘why’ of it has remained tricky. Was it a clash of egos between Nehru and Jinnah, as the wags believe? Or was it a Hindu revivalist streak Jinnah spotted in the Congress, or could it be the party’s populist appeasement of unlettered Muslim masses with Gandhi’s strange support for the Khilafat Movement, which became the proverbial last straw for the secular Quaid and his foundations in Dadabhai Naoroji’s Congress?

Had there been an alternative way of thinking to rally the masses — Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, everyone — one wonders whether the result would not be pleasantly different. It is always tempting to speculate, mostly lazily but also occasionally with academic rigour and archival insights, whether the partition was not a brilliant way of subverting Bhagat Singh’s and Hasrat Mohani’s egalitarian mission from succeeding.

Others would see in it the torpedoing of Subhas Bose’s religiously and culturally inclusive vision of militant opposition to colonialism. Had his Indian National Army struck roots across the subcontinent, and possibly beyond, wouldn’t the story of India or of Pakistan, or both, be different? These, however, are areas of counterfactual history. Had Jalaluddin Khilji seen through the murder plot by his nephew, of which he had an inkling, where would Allauddin be in history? Newspaper headlines would lose their sheen for sure, and Malik Mohammed Jayasi would have to find another villain as a counterpoint in his mystical composition, ‘Padmavat’.

The Gandhi-Jinnah approach to colonialism is also seen, not without a grain of truth, as being collaborative and legalistic with the European rulers, and combative with each other. One incident of raw violence could bring Gandhi’s entire pacifist movement against British rule to a grinding halt.

In a world before Westphalia, societies and empires negotiated, constantly shifting borders that shrank and expanded and shrank again. This was just as true of ancient India, before the Congress and Muslim League agreed to freeze the idea of India and imagined a map as theirs. And thus began their quarrel over a myopically created land mass, but in a religious binary. Gandhi believed Hindus and Muslims could live as equals in an India dominated by Hindus. Jinnah thought there was just as good a chance of that ideal being sustained under Muslim hegemony. History tends to flirt with ironies. Gandhi would become a figure of hate and calumny in his country, and while Jinnah fared much better in his, he did have many interpreters of what he thought, wanted and articulated.

Both can be accused of error of judgment in hindsight, for neither the elitist League nor the upper-caste Congress leadership was prepared to see the complex society that India was since time immemorial. Historian B.D. Chattopadhyaya passed away recently, and was not around when the Congress was jostling with the League without consulting Ambedkar and others who saw the idea of nationhood as being separate from religion. The result was that the leaders whipped history and geography into a batter to cook up a delicious falsehood that has been served to the masses.

Chattopadhyaya taught ancient history at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) but kept a lower profile than the giants that strode the faculty, led by Romila Thapar, S. Gopal, Bipan Chandra and Sabyasachi Bhattacharya. He would have disabused the Congress of the ahistorical notion of a Unitarian India it began to see in the colonially constructed past. He would have also given a rest to the League’s construction of a monolithic religious majority in India.

Professor Mujib, who was vice-chancellor of Jamia Millia in the 1920s and whose book *Indian Muslims* is a seminal study of the caste system running through the community, would have enlightened Gandhi and Jinnah about the fact that just as Hindus are not a monolithic community, neither are Indian Muslims.

Chattopadhyaya’s research pours cold water on the concept of an ancient and vast Bharatavarsha, an idea that he posited was illusory and mythical. There was along with Ambedkar’s caste-based challenge to the idea of a Hindu India, the Sikhs, the Christians and large and varied swathes of tribespeople from Balochistan to Assam that were never taken into confidence about the mainstream discourse dominated by the Hindu-Muslim binary that decided the fate of what happened to be an intensely complex South Asia.

The writer is Dawn’s correspondent in Delhi.

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THE PERILS OF REJECTING HISTORY

Pakistan’s failure to formulate a vision or allocate resources to the writing of history since 1947 will have catastrophic consequences, argues historian MANAN AHMED ASIF.



Photo: Agha Ziauddin Barani

In this rare meta image, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah autographs his portrait at a reception in Karachi in December 1947.

IN January 1956, Soong Ching Ling, a founding member of the Peoples Republic of China, visited Pakistan and gave a speech broadcast over Radio Pakistan. She commented on the relative newness of the two nations — both, at the time, created less than a decade ago — as well the “ancient civilisations” that both had inherited. She crucially linked the progress of the two nations to “a general national awakening” and the “galvanisation of public spirit.” She stressed the importance of the study of “history as a science”, so that the various superstitions and colonial distortions could be eliminated. “Colonialism is incompatible with peace”, and so she argued for the need for an anti-colonial project of history-writing.

The question of writing history had already become an urgent matter by 1956. When the British partitioned the subcontinent, they were also meant to separate the colonial archives, but that did not happen. The records of the Viceroy went to London, the records related to the princely states were burned, and the imperial records of the colonial state, which were housed in Delhi, became the National Archives of India. There was never a division of the records of the colonial state or other functioning archives in 1947. Pakistan was created with a deficit not only in funds, armies, bureaucracies, but also in history.

This was recognised at the first (closed) meeting of the Pakistan Historical Records and Archives Commission which took place in Karachi in 1948. At that meeting, a Central Directorate of Archives was created with the aim of streamlining and preserving the main repositories — the Central Record Offices in East Bengal, Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab which were created and modelled on the already existing office in what at the time was the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).

In 1954, a second meeting of the commission was held in Peshawar. A survey was presented highlighting the severe lack of resources and infrastructure. Not only was the new country without any historical or bureaucratic records to help guide it, there was a lack of funds and a national vision for even undertaking such a project.

While the new state made repeated claims to the government of India for sharing the indices or catalogues of the archives in Delhi, they were rebuffed. In 1955, the commission requested the government of Pakistan to create a new physical building to house the national records and archives. This did not end up materialising until 1973 when the National Documentation Centre was set up.

Already, there were concerns about what records

would be preserved or who could even access these records. As early as the 1954 meeting, it was clear that the Department of Defence would keep its own records. At the 1970 meeting of the commission in Dhaka, historians complained that the records of the Pakistan Muslim League were seized by Field Marshal Ayub Khan and given to Karachi University, but the university would not give access to scholars from East Pakistan wanting to consult the records.

Others mentioned the difficulties of knowing where papers of political leaders, national poets or even the official legislature were to be made available to scholars. Still more was the vexed question of private papers and private libraries, and their relationship to the national urgency of archiving and preserving the past.

After the creation of Bangladesh, there was a new National Commission on Historical Cultural Research, led by K.K. Aziz, that was established in 1973. The commission held conferences in 1973, 1974 and 1975. There was now a new concern: how does one write the history of ‘modern’ Pakistan — that is, post-1947?

Aziz would summarise the problem facing the historians of modern period as lack of independence of thought and resources, lack of institutional sources, professional security and a general neglect for any consideration of historical truth. Most critically, Aziz produced a long list of individuals and organisations whose papers needed to be collected in the National Archives. None would eventually make it there.

Thus, parallel to the crisis of the archives of Pakistan was the crisis of history-writing itself. Where the question of the archives wrestled with current geography, bureaucracy and repositories, history-writing almost immediately looked to the early history of Islam and not to capturing the history of the newly founded state.

The Pakistan History Society was founded in 1950 at the behest of Fazlur Rahman, then minister for education and commerce. It was meant explicitly to create translations of medieval Persian histories — making critical editions and translations of Jaffar Aftabchi’s memoir of Humayun, and Ibn Bajjah’s *Ilm-ul-Nafs*.

It began publishing the *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* in 1953. Fazlur Rahman introduced the journal, and the work of the society, as the task to “start seriously the work of re-writing the history of Islam”. Notably, not of Pakistan. The focus was explicitly on early Islam, and Philip K. Hitti was the guest of honour at the inauguration of the journal.

This was a history meant to highlight “the glorious conduct of Muslim rulers under the guidance of Islam” outside of the subcontinent. A quarterly, in its first 12 issues, there were 100 articles and only 12 were on the medieval period in Hindustan — mostly on Emperor

Akbar. The vast majority were focussed on the Umayyad and Abbasid periods.

Two further organisations concerned with history-writing, ominously divided, came into being after the Pakistan History Society. The Asiatic Society of Pakistan in West Bengal was founded in Dhaka in 1952, with the aim of being akin to the “Asiatic Society of Bengal in undivided India”. The Historical Research Institute was founded at the University of Punjab in 1960.

It was the latter that would begin to publish the *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* (West Pakistan) in 1964 as a quarterly — with the aim being “to be modern as well as earlier, with special emphasis on ‘West Pakistan’.” This journal was chaired by S.M. Ikram. Many luminaries published in this journal, including A.H. Dani, Yar Muhammad Khan, Pir Hisamuddin Rashidi, Iftikhar Ahmad Ghauri, Muhammad Bashir Hussain, Nabi Bakhsh Baloch, M. Kabir, S.M. Jaffar and others. The bulk of their work concerned textual and material pre-partition histories of politics in West Pakistan.

After 1971, there was sharp switch to the national policies on understanding history itself. The study of the earliest period of Islam and the arrival of Muslim rule to the subcontinent became the key focus for historical writing.

The 1980s gave a new ideology and a turn towards writing the history of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and a small group of men engaged in the freedom struggle. This was enabled by the creation of the National Archives and its nearly exclusive focus on the collections of Jinnah’s papers. Even a cursory survey of the articles published in the 1980s onwards shows that most articles are focussed on the founding figures (largely biographic and hagiographic) and on religious history.

The crisis of the archives was never resolved. One can peruse any recent history of Pakistan published and found nary an archival document listed in the footnotes. A much more significant lack is in understanding the history of Pakistan after 1947. The military remains absent from any publicly accessible archive, as well the religious political organisations and political parties. The personal papers of any prominent political figure, even heads of state, such as the Bhuttos or the Sharifs, are submitted to no repository. Important bureaucracies, such as Police, Civil Services, Water, etc., do not register their archives for any scholarly purpose. Often, any records available are simply working papers at the municipal or field level — literally policed by the working officials.

The crisis of history-writing is even less resolved. In today’s Pakistan, there is not a single historical journal

published that is recognised for scholarly excellence in the global scholarly community. There is not a single PhD-granting history department that can claim a reputation for producing excellence in scholarship. Pakistan has given no historical schools of thought, method or analysis to the world of scholarship.

There are no great demands for historians as intellectuals or interlocutors in the public sphere. One hears rumours about the gutting and hollowing out of history departments in Dhaka, Karachi, Quetta and Lahore, and the elimination of any scholarly voice capable of addressing a forbidden perspective. However, these rumours cannot be verified, for there is a lack of records for what may have transpired at any given moment.

If journalism is the first draft of history, then history remains in the drafting stage for Pakistan. Paradoxically, there is a great deal of emphasis on history by the political and religious establishments. There, it is a claim on a golden age — long gone — to which the nation-state must tether itself. This ahistorical rendering of the past is made possible precisely because the tools of historical trade as well as the practitioners of history could never flourish.

The flourishing is rather of memoirs and first-person reportages masquerading as ‘behind-the-curtain’ or ‘corridor-of-power’ views written by generals, journalists, bureaucrats and personalities. Such a biased, self-referential and closed ecosystem reproduces itself. It emphasises the individual and sinister, unaccountable forces as actors (remember: no one has to ever cited any material evidence, just hearsay, innuendo or testimony). It produces a messianic and apocalyptic politics where the hidden world and the empirical world cannot be differentiated.

Pakistan is among the 50 poorest nations in the world, with an average life expectancy of around 67 (it was under 45 in 1947). The adult literacy rate hovers around 60pc. We are also among the top 10 countries with the largest external debts. These lines are being written in English for a very limited audience that may be comfortably removed from the harshness and precarity of daily life for the vast majority of Pakistanis.

The history available to reflect with, or learn from, is delivered via WhatsApp and Facebook and is very far from the ‘science’ that we know it must be. The public spirit galvanised by this history is sectarian, identitarian and orthodox. The oxygen-deprived archives and historians can only watch in silence.

The writer is a historian of Indian Ocean World focussing on the medieval and early modern period. He teaches at Columbia University in New York, USA.

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CAUGHT BETWEEN THE STATE AND RELIGION

The state has progressively given way to right-wing obscurantists in a desperate bid to retain control. **MAKHDOOM ALI KHAN** stresses that what was needed instead was an accommodation with regional nationalist forces.



Prime Minister Chaudhry Muhammad Ali presenting the Constitution Bill to the central legislature in Karachi. The Bill was passed on February 29, 1956, and marked Pakistan's transition from a British Dominion to a Republic. (Courtesy: Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Collection/ Mr. Khalid Anwar)

AN engagement with the Constitution of Pakistan is like being in love. It is never without anxiety. There is always a lingering concern. The fear of failure is constant. And if the forever falls apart, one never stops thinking of the what-ifs: what if a moment had been seized, a hesitation overcome, a turn avoided and a road taken? The momentary may have become permanent. The bleak, sublime. A life awry may have found a happy course. Yet, we are where we are. Yet again, we cannot stop wishing that it was different. Better.

It began well. In a little over seven years, one man, by the force of his personality, imposed his will on the politics of India, succeeded in creating a country and securing independence. It was a quick and unexpected happy ending. That in any event is the official story. Let us stick with that.

Like many such quick and happy endings, the troubles began almost immediately after. Many of these were foreseeable and measures perhaps could have been initiated to address them. But like in all such matters, those consumed by the pursuit of the ideal had little time for the mundane. There was perhaps also the realisation that sorting out the prosaic may unravel the poetry. And then there was the possibility that the inevitability of partition may force enough concessions, out of those opposed, to make it unnecessary. Whatever the reason, the attention to detail which the tedium of life thereafter inevitably entailed did not detain them.

That the very issues which made him seek partition would dog the state of Pakistan could not have been unobvious to the astute lawyer that Mohammad Ali Jinnah was. The genesis of his disagreement with Congress leaders, though eventually wrapped in a religious slogan to give it popular traction, was constitutional — not religious. He opposed the Nehru Report because it advised scrapping of separate electorates, encouraged vesting residuary powers with the Centre, favoured weaker provinces, and opposed weightage for minorities. He proposed a federal constitutional framework with a weak centre, residual legislative powers for the provinces and constitutional guarantees for the fundamental rights of minorities.

The Fourteen Points articulated by Jinnah made constitutional demands. Half the points conspicuously made no reference to religion at all. The remaining half were also more constitutional than communal. Some of these had a religious tinge, no doubt. There were none, however, which could not be accommodated within a secular, federal, constitutional framework.

It was to rally his people and, provoked by challeng-

ers to his authority to speak for the Muslim community, that Jinnah later started moving away from this constitutional position. He began to argue that communal harmony could not be produced by a constitution or secured by courts. At the same time, it was no secret that the maximalist religious position was negotiable if minimum constitutional guarantees were provided.

As late as the arrival of the Cabinet Mission in 1946, he was prepared to trade the demand of a separate homeland for entrenched constitutional safeguards in a federation with a weak centre. When constitutional accord became impossible, the constitutional grounds were downplayed. Communal disharmony and religious antipathy were played up and partition along religious lines was justified.

With Pakistan, it should have been the end of the story of discord. It was not. It should have not come as a surprise that the nationalists in Pakistan would make constitutional demands for their provinces similar to those that Jinnah had made for the Muslim community and the protection of its language, culture and identity.

The Muslim League had not given much thought to post-partition constitutional issues. There was no blueprint of a constitutional design. The Government of India Act, 1935, with some changes had to serve the purpose. It was inadequate to accommodate nationalist concerns.

The immense popularity of Jinnah was not enough to contain nationalist sentiment even during the one year that he survived. With him gone, disagreements became more acute. The insistence of Jinnah to be the sole spokesman for all the Muslims of India was essential for the success of the Pakistan movement. His dynamism was magnified by the lack of qualities in the team around him. Now this lack of qualities became a serious liability. There was no one who could speak with similar authority.

The difficult task of nation-building fell in the hands of largely second-tier politicians. Some of them had no constituency in Pakistan. Their increasing reliance on the state services to push their agendas brought them into politics. These uninspired politicians and their bureaucratic surrogates were not up to the task of transforming a political movement into a functioning political party, translating ideals into structures of the state and creating a nation out of linguistically and culturally heterogeneous and geographically distanced nationalities.

Here was a country where the population of the Eastern wing outnumbered that of all four provinces in the West. The capital of the country, the seat of the Supreme Court, the principal civil secretariat, the General Headquarters, the centres of economic power and the elites

who dominated these state apparatus and commercial enterprises were all in the less populous Western wing. The judiciary, the civil service, the armed forces had been a part of the colonial administration of control.

These difficulties and complexities raised enough issues to perplex the most acute constitutionalists. A broad national perspective was required to negotiate serious conflicts on the distribution of powers and the details of constitutional structure. The form of democratic government, the nature and extent of franchise, the character of the constitution, the division of legislative, executive and judicial authority and the safeguards for numerical minorities and economically and culturally disadvantaged people had to be worked out with a delicate touch.

The ruling elite chose just the opposite. In January 1949, the Public and Representative Office Disqualification Act (Proda) was introduced to disqualify troublesome politicians. To lend credibility to the process, judges were put in charge. It did not work. Instead, the public perception that these judicial orders served political ends tarnished the judicial image. An unending process of judicial embroilment in politics began. The Elected Bodies Disqualification Order (Ebdo) of General Ayub Khan followed suit.

The refusal to pursue politics of tolerating dissent and reaching accord through accommodation has its roots in the early days after independence. One of its many consequences is that political questions that are best resolved politically continue to dog the courts. These range from the dismissal of the Constituent Assembly in 1954, to the necessity of four military coups, dissolutions of parliament, declarations of emergency, the authority of the prime minister to bypass the Constitution and the validity of votes cast in the National Assembly on issues of critical importance.

Sir Ivor Jennings described the series of lengthy constitutional and legal disputes, which followed the 1954 dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by Governor-General Ghulam Mohammad, as “of interest not only to Pakistan but to any student of the fundamental principles of constitutional law”. That remains the case. These interesting questions are also deeply divisive.

Also requiring resolution was the relationship of state and religion. Whatever may have been the populist motivations of the elite, the people had been made to march to the beat of a religious drum. They could not simply be told that, with independence, the slogan had lost relevance. It did not have to be the defining theme of the constitution, but if a theocracy was to be avoided, a balance had to be found.

The solution of the post-Jinnah leadership was to elevate the slogan of the movement as an answer to

complex constitutional questions. All nationalist, linguistic and cultural differences were to be subsumed in an Islamic state. In less than a year after Jinnah's death and within two months of Proda, Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan had the Objectives Resolution tabled in the Constituent Assembly. There was no prior attempt to educate the public or to elicit public opinion. The prime minister left no doubt what it was intended to achieve.

The object was to “convert Pakistan into a laboratory where we could experiment upon the principles of Islam”. These provided a “panacea for the many diseases which have crept into the life of humanity today”. Democracy, freedom, tolerance and social justice were all embodied in the Quran and Sunnah. He also made no secret that he “advocated the suppression of provincial feelings”.

The fears of the minority, that the majority was proceeding to set up a theocracy where political debate would be stifled and minorities marginalised, were rejected. In Islam, he stated, the “question of theocracy simply does not arise”. He saw no difficulty in a “non-Muslim being the “head of an administration under a constitutional government”.

This set the tone. Religion occupied a central place in constitution-making. It also provided a convenient handle to reject nationalist sentiment. Being a Muslim meant being a member of one nation. The need for accommodation disappeared. The patriotic and religious credentials of those who made a demand for more authority for the provinces and a weaker centre were questioned. That this is exactly what Jinnah had sought before independence received no consideration.

The constitutional debates were protracted; the problems intractable. With the assassination of Liaquat and the appointment of Ghulam Mohammad as governor-general, a decline in the popularity of Muslim League and ascendancy of bureaucracy in the affairs of the state, nationalist sentiment became even more difficult to contain.

The election results of 1954 in East Pakistan removed all doubts about the unpopularity of the League. The framing of the first Constitution in 1956 offered some hope for a return to democratic norms. Within a span of a little more than two years, the country saw four prime ministers.

The military coup of Gen Ayub Khan in 1958 brought a semblance of order. The deep fissures within the country were papered over. Neither the coup nor the constitution which followed did anything to



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A RESOUNDING ‘NO’ TO THEOCRACY

Although Jinnah declared that Pakistan would not be a theocracy, DR SYED JAFFAR AHMED believes that subsequent governments failed to develop a national narrative or ideology to reflect the Quaid’s ideals.



Mohammad Ali Jinnah offering Eid prayers (left) in Burns Garden Karachi in 1947. The Constituent Assembly was the venue of the historic August 11, 1947, inaugural speech of the Quaid-i-Azam in which he proclaimed “you are free to go to your temples... religion... has nothing to do with the business of the state.” In this historic image (right) of another Constituent Assembly session, the Governor-General, is seen seated to the left of the aisle facing the Speaker, and Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan on its right. (Courtesy: Press Information Department Archive)

EVER since its inception, Pakistan has undergone multifarious crises, resulting mainly from its unresolved contradictions. The uneasy relations between a powerful centre and weak provinces, conflict between authoritarian regimes and democratic aspirations, the civil-military dichotomy, and such other elements continue to adversely affect the cause of national integration.

But the most important and all-encompassing is the crisis of nation-building, and the country’s failure in constructing its very idea of nationhood. Often expressed in the idiom of ‘ideology’, the concept of nationhood owes its validity to its capacity to identify, address and successfully respond to the aggregated needs of society, thus creating a feeling of commonness among the people. Ideologies are not pre-given nor are they ordained externally. Ideologies are human constructs, and nations evolve them in response to their material interest, and in the light of their historical collective experiences.

The merit of an ideology lies in how best it represents its society, its ethos, its aspirations and perceived goals. The sustenance of ideologies also depends on how appropriately their architects constructed them, not as they subjectively wished, but as the objective representation of their socio-political conditions demanded.

Today, we live in a world of nation states, almost all of whom claim to have an ideology which they use to seek allegiance of their citizens; they succeed in doing so if material facts and the socio-political conditions corroborate with the ideological claims, otherwise ideologies remain in the realm of imagination and fantasy and forcing such fantasies on the people prove counterproductive; they create cleavages in society and distance the state from society.

FRUITLESS EXERCISES

This, unfortunately, has been the experience of our country in which, since independence, the ‘Ideology of Pakistan’ was designated to serve as the grand narrative. Lately, a ‘national narrative’ is being constructed which replicates the erstwhile ideology. That these exercises have remained fruitless suggests that they were constructed in disregard of the specific facts and realities of the country. As our history shows, these were also used to deny and suppress the plurality of society.

At the time of its creation, Pakistan fitted the category of countries about which Rupert Emerson had proclaimed in his *From Empire to Nation* that they were not nations in being, but in hope. Pakistan, despite a long journey of 75 years, still finds itself in the same category. One may ask why it could not succeed in creating a sense of nationhood, a question that inevitably compels one to peep into the past and see how this country came into being and what the founding fathers, particularly Mohammad Ali Jinnah, an unparalleled leader having the credit of creating a country, thought about nation-formation.

CONCEPT OF NATIONHOOD

Central in this regard is his concept of nationhood as it manifested itself in his statements not only during the period when he was a player in all-India politics, but also when Pakistan came into being and he gave his vision of what a Pakistani nation would be. Jinnah had looked into the nation-formation processes as these emerged in modern times.

In the pre-partition days, Jinnah’s speeches in the Imperial Legislative Council, the positions he took

on different legislations, his stand on the communal divide in India and his thoughts on successive political development in the field of constitutional reforms, all suggest that he was greatly influenced by the liberal political statesmen, like Dadabhai Nauroji, Pherozeshah Mehta and G.K. Gokhale, in India, and William Gladstone and John Morley in Britain, who thought that only through participatory democracy, suitable federal arrangements and a secular state, could the edifice of nationhood be erected in a society with extraordinary diversities.

INBUILT SECULARISM

A number of instances could be cited to show how the values of democracy, fair play and secularism expressed themselves in the positions taken by Jinnah. As for secularism, it was inbuilt in Jinnah’s concept of nationhood right from the beginning.

It is known that in the beginning of his political career he was not in favour of separate electorate. Jinnah in that period believed that such an allowance for a minority was likely to give it a permanent minority status. In the Congress session of 1906, he as a member of that organisation, moved an amendment to the official resolution asking to delete the clause regarding reservation of seats in the legislature and services for backward classes.

He observed that “Mohammaden Community should be treated in the same way as the Hindu community”. In 1913, he opposed the government’s decision to grant communal representation in self-governing bodies. At one point, he told the students of Dayal Singh College, Lahore: “This college does not believe in religious creed. I, too, feel that the salvation of India lies in this non-sectarian feeling.”

Jinnah also did not like the partition of Bengal in 1905 because he thought it was done to divide the region. When he joined the Muslim League, he took positions that were not welcomed by the traditional elite of the organisation. His role in bringing the Congress and League closer and bringing them to agree on the famous Lucknow Pact also shows that he did not look at the Hindu-Muslim equation as a communal issue, rather he viewed it as a political matter that was obstructing nation-formation in India. Even when he accepted to view the Muslims as a minority, his main concern was to overcome the angularity of the minority and the majority divide.

He worked for some form of affirmative action that may enable the Muslims to get a share in national institutions bigger than what their size in the overall population would have entitled them to get. He also presented formulas through which the Hindu-Muslim representation in the provincial legislatures was balanced in a reciprocal manner.

All this was done to address the communal issue through political means. On occasions he came up with proposals for better Muslim representation, like when he proposed it in the famous Delhi Muslim Proposals, and offered to give up separate electorate in return.

When in the middle of the 1930s he moved on to claim Muslims to be a nation and not a minority, his understanding of nationhood compelled him to evoke the nation’s right of self-determination that had by then emerged as a universally accepted principle. He, in 1940 at the time of the presentation of the Lahore Resolution, suggested that India’s crisis was not a national crisis, but an international one. He suggested that all nations living in India had the right of self-expression and self-determination.

When Jinnah came up with the demand for Pakistan, he took pains to explain that Pakistan would

not be a theocracy. By its very definition, theocracy is the opposite of secularism. So, when Jinnah said Pakistan would not be a theocracy, he was actually telling what it would be.

A section of religio-political intelligentsia insists that theocracy was a system specific to Christianity. One wonders why Jinnah did not know this, and found it necessary to recurrently clarify that Pakistan would not be a theocracy. On the eve of partition, in July 1947, he said: “Islam and its idealism have taught us democracy. It has taught equality of men, justice and fair play to everybody ... In any case, Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic state ...”.

Jinnah made all such pronouncements not just to dispel the apprehensions that the non-Muslim citizens of the would-be new country could have, but also because, knowledgeable about Muslim history, he knew how on occasions the clergy got access to state power and used it to its advantage under the cover of religion. It is not difficult to realise this fact even in contemporary times when we have a Muslim theocratic state in Afghanistan and another in Iran.

Here it is important to refer to Jinnah’s August 11, 1947, speech in which he gave a complete and very convincing elaboration of what had actually happened in India that had paved the way for its partition, and how the new country could avoid such division in its future journey. Jinnah believed that, if not settled politically, communal and cultural issues would become a permanent source of division in society, and would serve as a major obstacle in nation-building. The Aug 11 speech is the best expression of Jinnah’s concept of nationhood.

Unfortunately, in Pakistan, the detractors translated it ‘atheism’ which it surely was not. Secularism accommodates all as long as there is no imposition on one’s belief on the rest. The neutrality of the state is essential if it seeks allegiance of all its citizens and if it aims at realising a united nation. Such an arrangement, regrettably, was not realised.

Within two years of independence, the state’s character was redefined through the Objectives Resolution. The non-Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly demonstrated their resentment whichever they could. Jinnah’s chosen law minister, Jogendra Nath Mandal, soon left Pakistan.

IDEOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

During the last 75 years, the state’s use of its ideological narrative to provide religious sanctions to its policies has remained an essential part of statecraft, though this reliance varied in different phases.

In the first two decades, the civil and military bureaucracies which had been groomed during the British period, and which exercised hegemony on the state’s power, used religion in a selective manner. It was used to impose central dictates and policies over provinces. The pro-West foreign policy pursued in the Cold War period was also justified on ideological grounds.

The use of ideological narrative became a more recurrent theme during the rule of General Yahya Khan whose information minister Gen Sher Ali became the most vocal torchbearer of the ‘ideology of Pakistan’.

The debate around religion and socialism became one of the defining themes of the 1970 elections. In this background, the success of two secular organisations, Awami League (AL) and Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) was a historic development, but the election results with AL emerging as the

majority party could not be accepted by the establishment and the West Pakistani political elite that had allied with it.

1973 CONSTITUTION

After the separation of East Pakistan, the scene in the western wing characteristically changed. Once in power, the PPP compromised on many of its pronouncements. The 1973 Constitution, though a positive achievement, was a curious mix of religious and secular clauses. One finds it difficult to agree with Prof Mohammad Waseem’s observation that the PPP government “often transgressed the chartered path of the establishment” in pursuit of its “socialist agenda” (*Political Conflict in Pakistan*; 2022). As a matter of fact, despite reformative initiatives, the regime operated within the ideological framework of the state.

The 1973 Constitution had more religious clauses than the previous constitutions. The regime also dealt with its opponents taking the support of the ideological narrative. In 1975, the secular National Awami Party (NAP) was banned and its leadership was put behind bars. The regime’s attorney-general, Yahya Bakhtiar, made full use of the ideological narrative while pleading the case against NAP in the Supreme Court, which upheld the government’s ban.

The NAP leaders who were not arrested established a successor organisation, the National Democratic Party (NDP), with Naseem Wali Khan, the spouse of NAP leader Wali Khan, as its vice-president. Quite interestingly, the NDP did not include secularism in its constitution which meant that in the new Pakistan, this set of leadership also was trying to adjust to the ideological framework of the state.

The most aggressive use of the ideological apparatus, however, came during the rule of Gen Ziaul Haq who through the naked use of power imposed strict repressive measures against democratic forces, women and the minorities. The country was made a frontline state against communism and a war was launched in Afghanistan at the behest of the Western powers.

Eight years of this project were led to the creation of the Afghan Taliban, established in the hope of enabling Pakistan to get strategic depth in the north-west leading to the Central Asian regions. The 9/11 events ushered in yet another phase of extreme militancy. The militant outfits soon became autonomous and found their market in the external terrorist theatres.

Following the 2014 Army Public School incident in Peshawar, the policy of patronising extremist organisations was reviewed. A National Action Plan was devised, which suggested numerous steps ranging from reform in governance and judiciary to the devising of a National Narrative and clearing the syllabi of different pressures, resurfaced with new names. As for the reforms in seminaries, the whole education system was in time ‘seminarised’ in the name of Single National Curriculum (SNC). It is clear that in the name of religion, everything can be done by anyone.

After 75 years of independence, the grand narrative coined by the ruling class has left society polarised in every sense imaginable. Pakistan’s hopes lie only in genuine democratic and federal processes. Coexistence, if one doesn’t like the word ‘secularism’, is the only way to free the state from its self-acquired fetters.

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WINNING OVER THE PRINCELY STATES

YAKOOB KHAN BHANGASH narrates the stories behind the accession, in the months following Independence, of the major Princely States to Pakistan – Kalat, Khairpur and Bahawalpur among others, without which a contiguous map of West Pakistan would not have been possible.



Photo: Margaret Bourke-White



Clock wise, The Amir of Bahawalpur, Nawab Sadiq Mohammad Khan Abbasi V in full state regalia announces the accession of Bahawalpur State to Pakistan on October 5, 1947. (Courtesy: Princess Yasmien Abbasi Archive, London). Governor-General Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Mir Ahmad Yar Khan, the Khan of Kalat, are locked in friendly negotiations in Karachi prior to the announcement of Kalat's accession to Pakistan. (Courtesy: Khan of Kalat Family Archives). Miangul Abdul Wadud signs the Instrument of Accession enabling Swat to join Pakistan on November 3, 1947. On the right are his son Miangul Jahanzeb, his grandson Miangul Aurangzeb and the Chief Secretary of Swat Attaullah. (Courtesy: Adnan Aurangzeb Collection, Swat). Mir George Ali Murad Khan Talpur II — “the boy prince of Khairpur” — at Faiz Mahal, Khairpur, two months after the October 3, 1947 accession of Khairpur to Pakistan. The Regent of Khairpur Mir Ghulam Hussain Khan Talpur looks on. (Courtesy: Mir of Khairpur Family Collection)

MOST Pakistanis have never seen the map of Pakistan at independence: can you imagine a Pakistan without most of Balochistan, Bahawalpur division, Malakand division, Khairpur Mirs and Gilgit? But this was the reality on the day of independence, as none of these places happened to be a part of Pakistan.

When Pakistan and India were created in 1947, it was the split of British India. Only those territories directly ruled by the British were divided to form part of either country. But the Indian subcontinent contained another category of jurisdiction: the vast expanse of ‘Princely India’, which formed over one-third of the British Indian Empire and accounted for a fourth of its population. A collection of over 600 principalities, it ranged from states like Hyderabad and Kashmir, which were larger than most European states, to smaller ones like Vejanones, which barely boasted one square mile. As the British paramountcy lapsed, all of them also achieved their own independence.

Just as the British Indian politicians had a mere 73 days — from the Mountbatten plan to actual independence — the rulers of these princely states also had a very short time in which to decide a future for themselves. A large number of them had been under British suzerainty for centuries and had no experience of being on their own, while some, like Kashmir, had existed only under British rule.

While almost all enjoyed internal autonomy, none had experience in international affairs, defence and several other fields, as they were controlled by the British. Thus, British withdrawal and independence of states posed a serious dilemma for the rulers as well as the people of these states.

Always yearning for a more unitary country, the Indian National Congress was never keen on any of the princes retaining independence. Being a republican party, the Congress was against monarchical rule in any case, while allowing any principality to remain independent risked the ‘Balkanisation’ of India, in their opinion. The All-India Muslim League, on the other hand, led by the constitutionalist Mohammad Ali Jinnah, appreciated the legal position of

the states as independent entities after the British withdrawal.

As the D-Day approached, Congress devised a means by which to lure the princes to link up with the future Indian dominion. V.P. Menon, the clever Secretary of the States Department, formulated an ‘Instrument of Accession’ by which a ruler of a state would join only on the basis of defence, foreign affairs and communications; in all other cases, the ruler preserved his/her autonomy. Since these were fields administered by the outgoing British, many smaller princes saw this as a good deal and signed on the dotted line. The larger states demurred, but Congress had local affiliates, and pressure and violence were often used to bring about accession; the Dewan of Travancore was even stabbed.

In the case of Pakistan, since the Quaid-i-Azam was busy with setting up the new country, no efforts were made before independence to woo any of the princes. Very soon, however, Pakistan became cognizant of the importance of the princely states. For example, if Khairpur and Bahawalpur had not joined Pakistan, the rail link between Lahore and Karachi would have been broken; if Kalat had not joined, we would not have most of Balochistan; and if the Frontier States and Gilgit had kept aloof, there would be no land connection with China.

The first state to join Pakistan was, however, Junagadh. Sadly, it is no longer governed by Pakistan. Situated about 300 miles away from Karachi in the Kathiawar region, this coastal principality was the first to exercise its right to join Pakistan. The distance, combined with the fact that the population was over 80 per cent Hindu, led to a revolt. The Nawab, Mahabat Khanji, tried to keep control, but conditions were such that he fled to Karachi towards the end of October 1947. The Indian government subsequently sent in troops and occupied the territory. To date, Pakistan claims Junagadh as its legal part, with India in occupation of this Pakistani territory.

Next came the accession of Khairpur and Bahawalpur in early October 1947. Both were Muslim-majority and Muslim-ruled, and both had rulers who were friendly towards Pakistan, so accession was easily obtained. Interestingly, Khairpur’s ruler was the minor Mir George Ali Murad Talpur II,

who had acceded to the title just days before the transfer of power. Today, His Highness of Khairpur is the last surviving ruling prince in South Asia!

Four small states, with all except Amb under the Malakand Agency, formed the cluster of Frontier states. Where the Nawab of Amb had little choice but to join Pakistan as his state was almost surrounded by Pakistani territory in Hazara, the other three states had options. Chitral shared a border with Afghanistan and, being at that time largely inaccessible, could remain independent. But its ruler was very supportive of the Quaid-i-Azam and quickly signed over to Pakistan.

Swat was the youngest state in the British Indian Empire, having been recognised only in 1926. Its ruler in 1947 was its founder, the dynamic Miangul Abdul Wadud. Sensing that the new dispensation might be good for his new state, he quickly acceded to Pakistan, but not before quietly annexing the tribal area of Kalam, which greatly increased the area of his state.

Perched on the border with Afghanistan, Dir proved to be the most difficult. Its ruler, Sir Shah Jahan Khan, did not trust anyone and did not want any new agreements. It was only through the clever diplomacy of the Governor of the then North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), Sir George Cunningham, that Dir decided to join Pakistan and did not move towards Afghanistan. However, the nawab did not sign the usual Instrument of Accession, but simply signed a statement that his relations with Pakistan would be the same as those with the British.

While not technically a princely state, the accession of the Gilgit Agency was very interesting. Composed of four parts — Gilgit Wazarat, which was part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the tribal areas of Chilas, Koh Ghizr, Iskomen, and Yasin, the petty state of Punial, and the states of Hunza and Nagar — Gilgit Agency had long been administered by the British. As the date for transfer of power approached, the British gave the Agency to the Kashmir Durbar, which then promptly appointed a governor.

However, the British presence was maintained through the Gilgit Scouts, the main paramilitary organisation in the Agency, which was commanded by Major William Brown, and assisted by Captain Mathieson.

Barely 25, the young and energetic Maj Brown was in favour of Gilgit joining Pakistan in case Kashmir decided to join India. With Capt Mathieson and the help of some local leaders, Maj Brown devised Operation ‘Data Khel’, which was realised after Kashmir allegedly acceded to India. Thereafter, between the night of October 31 and November 1, 1947, Maj Brown launched a coup in Gilgit, arrested the governor of Kashmir, contained the Kashmir army detachment nearby, and then confidently telegraphed the premier of the NWFP that he had got Gilgit for Pakistan, and also secured the accession of Hunza and Nagar. Thus, without any knowledge or involvement of the Pakistan government, the whole of the Gilgit Agency came over to Pakistan!

The most contentious accession to Pakistan was that of Kalat State, which today forms about 80pc of Balochistan. Kalat was governed by its Khan, Ahmed Yar Khan, who was a close friend of the Quaid. It was Ahmed Yar Khan’s dream to keep Kalat independent while keeping a close connection with Pakistan. And it was not just the Khan. Most of the political forces in the state favoured independence, with the leader of the Kalat State Darul Awam, Ghous Baksh Bizenjo, famously remarking on the question of accession: “We have a distinct civilisation. We have a separate culture like that of Iran and Afghanistan. We are Muslims, but it is not necessary that by virtue of our being Muslims, we should lose our freedom and merge with others. If the mere fact that we are Muslims requires us to join Pakistan, then Afghanistan and Iran, both Muslim countries, should also amalgamate with Pakistan ... We are ready to have friendship with that country on the basis of sovereign equality, but by no means [are we] ready to merge with Pakistan ... We can survive without Pakistan.”

With such staunch opposition, the Khan further dithered, and in two meetings with Jinnah, could not agree to accession. When the bureaucrats took over the negotiations from Jinnah in February 1948, they realised that they could directly appeal to the sardars in the state, as the Khan blamed their lack of consensus as the main reason for the delay. Thus, in classic bureaucratic form, the government recognised the vassal states of Las Bela and Kharan as independent of Kalat

and accepted their accession while also elevating the Gichki Sardar of Makran — the brother-in-law of the Khan — to ruler status and also accepting his accession.

As a result, within a few days in mid-March 1948, the Khan was left with a quarter of his territory, which was now also landlocked. While he was still smarting from these accessions, a news item on All-India Radio on March 27, 1948, claimed that the Khan had approached India for accession. Sensing that this would inevitably bring a military response from Pakistan, the Khan immediately signed the Instrument of Accession to Pakistan. Thus ended a few months of independence for Kalat. However, not everyone accepted the accession and the Khan’s younger brother, Prince Abdul Karim, raised the banner of revolt in June 1948; the first of many future revolts of the Baloch, all emanating from this accession.

Therefore, it took almost a year for the map of Pakistan to take shape in the manner we are used to seeing now. These princely states then remained as distinct parts of Pakistan for some time. Khairpur, Bahawalpur and the Baloch states remained so till 1955; the Frontier states till 1969; and Hunza and Nagar till 1973.

Today, 75 years since Independence, the history and legacy of these states remain relevant to us not only in understanding how actually Pakistan was created, but also for assessing the different levels of state formation and consolidation in later years. Many issues in Balochistan still have their roots in Kalat, while the move for a separate province in southern Punjab was born during the Bahawalpur province restoration movement in 1970.

Similarly, the higher literacy and development rate in Swat is directly related to the progressive policies of its rulers. Thus, as we celebrate Pakistan’s 75 years of independence, let us also remember and appreciate how its different parts came together and how their diversity gives us rigour and strength.

The writer is presently a Fulbright Fellow at the LM South Asia Institute, Harvard University, USA. He is the author of, A Princely Affair: Accession and Integration of the Princely States of Pakistan, 1947-55.



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SHORT-CHANGING PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

The centralisation of power and the denial of provincial autonomy resulted in the secession of the eastern wing. Despite the enactment of the 18th Amendment in recent years, the question of political devolution is as yet largely unresolved, argues AHMED BILAL MEHBOOB.



President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto chairing a session of the National Assembly in Islamabad with an ongoing heated debate prior to the passage of the 1973 Constitution. The 1973 Constitution was passed by consensus. (Courtesy: National Assembly Collection Archives Islamabad)

MORE than anything else, it was our inability to manage the provincial aspirations for autonomy which resulted in the break-up of the country in 1971. Even today, despite having undergone a major constitutional makeover in the form of the 18th Constitutional Amendment in 2010 leading to an altered centre-province equation, the debate on provincial autonomy continues.

It had been a part of our political lexicon ever since the British Raj had introduced elected central and provincial legislatures in 1937. Although the demand for provincial autonomy by the All-India Muslim League (AIML) was meant to protect the Muslim-majority provinces from undue interference by a Hindu-dominated centre, the demand for a federal system acquired its own momentum and it became a highly desirable feature for the post-independence political system because of the geographical vastness and huge diversity of the subcontinent.

The operative part of the Pakistan Resolution had demanded that “... the areas in which Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North Western and Eastern Zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states, in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.” The key words here are “independent states” that were expected to be “autonomous and sovereign”. The resolution manifested the political consensus over the texture of the constituting units in the future homeland.

The promise of provincial autonomy, however, suffered a series of setbacks soon after independence. The first such action was the expansion of already elaborate powers of the central government in the Government of India Act, 1935, which served as the interim constitution. The governor-general, according to the interim constitution, had enormous powers of control over the provincial governments, such as the authority to choose, summon, and dismiss provincial ministers.

The dismissal of the Congress provincial government of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), led by Dr Khan Sahib, on August 22, 1947, under the instructions of the governor-general using the powers of the interim constitution set an unfortunate precedent in the context of provincial autonomy. The Khan ministry was dismissed while it still enjoyed the majority in the house and a new chief minister, Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, was imposed who swayed seven Congress members to join his party and mustered the required majority in the assembly.

The then Sindh chief minister, M.A. Khuhro, was dismissed on April 26, 1948, by the provincial governor under directions from the governor-general on charges of maladministration, gross misconduct and corruption. It was reported that the differences had arisen when the provincial governor reallocated some provincial cabinet portfolios without the chief minister’s knowledge.

Declaring Urdu as the only official language of the country by the central government provoked a strong protest from East Pakistan where the major-

ity of Pakistanis lived and most of them spoke Bengali as their native language.

The first draft presented by the Basic Principles Committee of the Constituent Assembly on September 28, 1950, also evoked a strong protest from East Pakistan. The draft proposed a bicameral legislature with equal powers for both houses. The upper house was to have equal representation of all the federating units. East Pakistan, with majority population, felt that its representation would be one-fifth in the upper house and that would considerably dilute its numerical superiority in view of the equal powers of both houses.

In the second draft of December 22, 1952, the powers of the House of the Units were considerably slashed and the principle of parity was introduced by allocating equal number of seats to East Pakistan on the one hand, and all the federating units in the western wing on the other, in both houses. This time the negative reaction came from Punjab which saw no logic in allocating the same number of seats to one federating unit as to all the other units put together in the western wing. Punjab also demanded equal powers for the two houses.

An attempt was made to break the constitutional deadlock through the ‘Muhammad Ali Bogra Formula’, which proposed a House of Units with equal representation to the five federating units, including East Pakistan. The House of the People was to be composed of 300 members divided among the five federating units on the basis of population. Equal powers were proposed for each house and provision of a joint session of the two houses was made to ensure parity between the eastern and western wings in the joint session. The draft constitution of 1954 died an unnatural death when the Constituent Assembly was dissolved by the governor-general on October 24, 1954.

ONE UNIT IS BORN

The second Constituent-cum-Legislative Assembly, which came into being on July 7, 1955, passed an act on Sept 30, 1955, to unify all federating units and territories in the western wing into One Unit, called West Pakistan. The job was accomplished after the dissolution of provincial governments in Punjab, the NWFP, Sindh and Bahawalpur state — apparently to overcome the resistance to One Unit.

The new prime minister, Chaudhry Mohammad Ali, who was heading a coalition government, unveiled a new draft constitution on January 8, 1956. Unlike the previous drafts, the latest draft constitution provided for a unicameral legislature consisting of 300 members, with 150 to be elected by East and West Pakistan each on the basis of parity despite the fact that East Pakistan had more than 55pc of the population, and, based on the population, it should have been allocated 166 seats.

The 1956 draft provided for greater provincial autonomy compared to the interim constitution as it slashed the Federal Legislative List to a bare 30 items, and the Provincial List was expanded to 94, with 19 items placed on the Concurrent List.

The powers of the president were enhanced in the 1956 draft compared to the ones provided in the earlier versions.

Despite the objections by Awami League and certain other parties in East Pakistan, the draft was passed on February 29, 1956, and the country was declared an Islamic Republic on March 23, 1956.

MARTIAL LAW IMPOSED

Provincial autonomy and the entire federal structure of Pakistan took a major hit on Oct 8, 1958, in the wake of which General Ayub Khan abrogated the Constitution, imposed martial law, dismissed the central and provincial governments and dissolved the three legislatures. The federal character of the state suffered a further setback when he gave the country the 1962 Constitution which had concentrated most powers in the office of the president.

Even the provincial governors, who were supposed to be the chief executives of the provinces, were to be appointed by the president and would hold office during the “pleasure of the president”. The provincial governor could not appoint or remove a provincial minister without the concurrence of the president. It was also provided that the governor of a province should, in the performance of his functions, be subject to the direction of the president.

Unlike all the drafts and constitutions, the 1962 Constitution had just one Legislative List; the federal one having 49 items. The residuary powers were vested in the provinces, but the central legislature was empowered to legislate on any matter concerned with a provincial subject on the grounds of national interest.

Besides the periods of direct military rule, the era of centralised governance under the 1962 Constitution will be known for the lowest quantum of provincial autonomy in the country’s history. Although Ayub Khan’s rule is credited for political stability and rapid economic development, it is important to understand that the denial of provincial autonomy during his time directly contributed to the public disillusionment with a united Pakistan which ultimately led to the separation of East Pakistan in 1971.

We should never forget that the Constituent Assembly elected in 1970 on the basis of universal adult franchise, giving representation to the two provinces in proportion to their population, was unable to meet and frame the new constitution because the talks between the elected representatives from East and West Pakistan prior to the formal convening of the session broke down owing to the differences over provincial autonomy.

The 1973 Constitution was framed by the first directly elected National Assembly of Pakistan. Chastened by the separation of East Pakistan, the truncated legislature representing the remaining four provinces and territories of Pakistan unanimously passed the 1973 Constitution. In the context of centre-province relations, the most important feature of the 1973 Constitution was the creation of a Council of Common Interests (CCI) to formulate policies regarding water, power, rail-

ways, industrial development etc., and to supervise the related establishments.

A LEGISLATIVE LANDMARK

The 18th Constitutional Amendment, a landmark in the journey towards greater devolution and signed into law by the president of Pakistan on April 19, 2010, enhanced provincial autonomy by omitting the Concurrent List and retaining just a Federal List divided into two parts. Although the Federal List expanded to include 71 subjects, 18 of these items were placed in Part II of the list which came within the jurisdiction of the CCI.

By all accounts, Pakistan’s journey in quest of the elusive balance in centre-province relations has been a turbulent one. Although constitutional provisions are certainly important, it is the sincere implementation of these provisions in a democratic environment which becomes critical once the basic law is in place. Constitutions are not static documents and the journey for improvements in them continues, but we seem to have achieved some reasonable balance in centre-province relations after the 18th Amendment; at least for now.

We must now focus on implementation of the agreed constitutional provisions dealing with centre-province relations. CCI and the National Economic Council (NEC) are two important institutions created under the 1973 Constitution and further strengthened through the 18th Amendment. Article 154(3) of the Constitution requires the CCI to meet quarterly, or four times every year, but on average, the CCI has met three times a year over the last 12 years since the passage of the 18th Amendment.

Similarly, the NEC, which has the representation from both the centre and the provinces, is supposed to meet twice a year, according to Article 156(4), but only one meeting has taken place per year on average during that time.

The 18th Amendment also requires that the CCI should have a permanent secretariat, but it was only at the end of 2021 that the permanent secretariat was established after a delay of 11 years.

These facts and figures indicate a non-serious attitude towards very clear constitutional requirements dealing with the sensitive subject of centre-province relations.

Besides faithful compliance with the constitutional provisions dealing specifically with centre-province relations, it is extremely important that the rule of law and democratic governance should be ensured in the true spirit of the Constitution.

It may not appear to be directly linked, but the phenomenon of forced disappearances has been around for quite some time and it is no secret that there is a disproportionately higher percentage of cases from two smaller provinces, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The central government would do well to initiate a process of dialogue and reconciliation in the two provinces which will definitely improve the critical centre-province relations.

The writer is President of the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency (Pildat).



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THE CONTINUING HAZARDS OF JUDICIAL IMBALANCE

Judicial overreach is no less dangerous than executive control of the judiciary. Courts achieve little when they try to do much. They are at their best when they operate away from the political thicket and gently nudge the nation in the right direction., writes MAKHDOOM ALI KHAN.



Photo: Iqbal Shehzad/White Star Photos

Women lawyers march in a torchlight procession in Rawalpindi-Islamabad during the hot summer of May 2007 in support of reinstating dismissed Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry.

JUDICIAL progress is much like that of a mountaineer. Two steps forward, one step back. Only those unfamiliar with it expect it to be linear, smooth and steady. Those familiar know that it is anything but. This forward movement and backward slide are inevitable in a federal republic with a written constitution. Such a system of government reflects the desire of a sovereign people to be ruled by a popularly elected government that adheres to the fundamental law.

The twin ideals of popular administration and legal limits are not always compatible. No constitution completely resolves this conflict. It is expected that politicians prepared to accept a corrective to their well-laid plans and judges who cautiously feel their way along instead of diving head-first into the hottest political cauldrons of the day will create room for play in the joints of the constitutional machine. With experience a balance will be found.

The way we began made seeking the centre more difficult. The judicial administration had not been set up to exercise a check on the colonial administration. It was designed to be a part of it. While the fairness of the judicial processes and the independence of the judiciary was much publicised, the scales were not evenly balanced in contests between Indians and Britishers or between the colonial administration and the people.

Matters deteriorated with the rise of the nationalist movement. The Indian press started challenging the representation of British justice as neutral, independent and impartial. As British justice played an important role in legitimising colonial rule, the press and the politicians demonstrated that colonial justice was as flawed as the colonial administration. This criticism was an attack on the legitimacy of colonial rule. Judges now acted with determination to quell the rising tide of nationalism and press criticism. British justice defended British rule.

Not only were the courts a part of the colonial administration and a source of its legitimacy, they also had no experience in dealing with federal questions and constitutionality of laws. Although in 1919 a policy of decentralisation was adopted the provinces were invested with a legal personality for the first time in 1935. Till then the constitutional design of India was not predominantly federal. Even the Government of India Act, 1935, neither recognised any fundamental rights of the people nor gave the courts the constitutional authority to review the legality of administrative action. This was the position on the eve of independence.

With the death of the founder of the country, a year after independence, decline in the popularity of the Muslim League, challenges to its authority by regional parties, delays in calling general elections and failure to frame a constitution, an increasingly unpopular government turned to judges for help.

Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by an unpopular governor-general plunged the courts in the biggest political dispute of the day. The decision of the Federal Court, in the *Tamizuddin* case, to uphold dissolution made the decision as controversial as administrative action. Public criticism was no longer mild. Gloves came off.

In a series of cases, in quick succession the court tried to correct the balance. The governor-general was declared to have no authority to make provisions as to the constitution through ordinances. He was required

to summon a Constituent Assembly. A number of specific conditions had to be met before this body could be regarded legal.

Not much appreciation was expressed for these decisions. Today, popular memory recalls *Tamizuddin* as the first step down the slippery slope of judicial acquiescence in executive excesses. The role of the court in reigning in the governor-general and framing of 1956 Constitution receives little attention.

Two years later, the 1956 Constitution was abrogated. Martial law was declared. Its validation, in the *Dosso* case, hurt the judicial image further. That, in the circumstances, there was little that the judges could do to undo martial law was seldom acknowledged. The courts clawed back by keeping the regime within the limits of the 1962 Constitution, robustly protecting rights, striking down the ban on a political party and by a progressive reading of the law of habeas corpus. None of these judgments altered popular perception. *Tamizuddin* and *Dosso* continued to cloud the public mind.

The declaration of Yahya Khan as a usurper and his martial law as unconstitutional, in the Asma Jilani case, improved matters somewhat. This was, however, short-lived. In 1977, Gen Ziaul Haq declared martial law. Unlike the previous two occasions, the Constitution was not abrogated. Several of its provisions were suspended and control was exercised through Martial Law Orders. The Supreme court validated these actions by invoking the Doctrine of Necessity. It also gave Gen Zia authority to amend the Constitution.

Matters were made worse by the conviction and sentencing to death of the widely popular prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, by the Lahore High Court. All applications that the chief justice was biased and should not hear the matter were rejected.

The Supreme Court dismissed his appeal by the narrowest of margins. The one-vote majority was provided by an *ad hoc* judge. Two judges who apparently supported Bhutto were excluded from the process. One of them, an *ad hoc* judge, was not given the extension which would have enabled participation. The other was hospitalised. He could have participated if counsels were directed to submit written arguments. In popular perception and on the legal plane the decision continues to remain controversial. This dealt a blow to the image of the judiciary from which it is struggling to recover.

An opportunity for the Supreme Court to distance itself from this historic wrong appeared when by a presidential reference its advisory opinion was sought about this decision. By then precedents had emerged both in the United Kingdom and the United States where courts had corrected such wrongs even after the death of the persons convicted. After a few hearings the reference was adjourned. More than a decade has passed since the reference was last listed for hearing. The opportunity has been all but missed.

Like in the past, the courts tried to keep the Zia regime within legal limits. They did not succeed. By a series of legal stratagems, martial law orders and by removing troublesome judges, Gen Zia held them at bay. When they finally got an opportunity, the judges responded quickly. They held that elections must be held on the basis of political parties, that even the military regime was required to conform to due process, and dissolution of the National Assembly was unconstitutional.

Much the same pattern was repeated after the coup of Gen Pervez Musharraf in 1999. A unanimous court, in the Zafar Ali Shah case, validated the coup and like in the case of Gen Zia gave him the authority to amend the Constitution. This time there was not much of an effort to regain lost ground. With some minor aberrations the retreat was almost complete. It continued till the relaxation of military control provided an opening and Gen Musharraf overreached by attempting to remove the chief justice of the Supreme Court.

Restoration of constitutional government between the Zia and Musharraf years and post-Musharraf should have given judges some respite. That was not to be. They remained in the political vortex. Dissolution of the National Assembly and dismissal of prime minister Benazir Bhutto, by president Ghulam Ishaq Khan, as well as of the provincial assemblies, by the governors of the provinces, were challenged in the High Courts.

Dissolution of the provincial assembly of the then NWFP was struck down by the Peshawar High Court. All the other challenges failed. The Supreme Court promptly suspended the Peshawar order. None of the appeals were heard and decided till much after the general elections. By that time, for all practical purposes, the dispute had become academic.

In 1993 when the president dismissed prime minister Nawaz Sharif and dissolved the National Assembly, the action was struck down and the assembly was restored. A similar challenge, in 1996, by Benazir failed. The significantly different outcomes and the inconsistent jurisprudence was heavily criticised.

A few disturbing trends emerged with the controversial appointment of a chief justice of Supreme Court by premier Bhutto. As initially he appeared to be favourably inclined towards the prime minister, an increasing resort was made to constitute small benches where he was in majority. Up till now most major political cases had been heard and decided by the full court or by large benches. That was no longer the case. Applications that major constitutional issues be heard by a full court were routinely dismissed. As the chief justice lacked support of his senior brethren, *ad hoc* and acting appointments were made to support him when larger benches could not be avoided.

Another disturbing trend was the disposal of major constitutional issues by short orders. Reasons followed months later. Instead of reasoning towards conclusions, judges, when they sat down to write, had to find reasons to fit the result.

A series of cases decided by the court concerned appointment of judges to the High Courts and the Supreme Court. Historically, all appointments to the superior courts had been made by the executive in consultation with the chief justice(s) concerned. A five-member bench of the court, by majority, concluded that the views of the chief justice in such consultations were binding and had to be followed by the executive; and that only the senior-most judge could be appointed chief justice. All appointments to the contrary, unless validated by the chief justice concerned, were declared unconstitutional.

A number of judges of the High Courts were, thus, removed. The constitutional protection against removal was bypassed. The chief justice now had a dominant role in all judicial appointments to superior courts. In another case, another five-member bench ruled that if the prime minister advised the president to appoint a judge against the wishes of the chief justice it would

constitute a ground for dissolution of the National Assembly by the president. For the first time, in the history of the subcontinent, the role of executive in appointment of judges was practically eliminated.

Soon disagreements between some judges and chief justice erupted in full public view. Judges sitting in benches passed orders against the chief justice. When he tried to hit back, he was restrained from working. He fell victim to the jurisprudence he had created. Now he did not get the full court he sought. His brethren removed him. Article 209 protecting judicial tenure which he had bypassed when removing others was now bypassed in his case.

Critics of this new jurisprudence pointed out that by a tenuous reliance on conventions, the court had rewritten the Constitution, both with regard to the role of the executive in such matters and the manner in which a judge of the superior court could be removed. Decisions in matters which changed the shared understanding and ordinary meaning of the constitutional text, by select benches, whose size and composition was predicated on the will of the chief justice, further fuelled controversy.

Years later, in the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, parliament sought to dilute the role of the chief justice by giving to a Judicial Commission the authority vested in him. It sought to introduce, through parliamentary committee, a role for the executive in judicial appointments. The matter was taken up by the Supreme Court and it appeared set to strike down the amendment. It was widely known that resistance to such a course by two judges prevented such an outcome.

To his credit, the chief justice, who had the majority solidly behind him, decided that consensus was more important than victory. The matter was referred back to parliament. The parliamentary initiative collapsed. The 19th Amendment to the Constitution reduced the role of the parliamentary committee to a cipher. The Judicial Commission survived. But the absolute power of the chief justice to summon its sessions, when he desires, and his control of its agenda, have been the subject of trenchant criticism by its members.

The judicial image recovered somewhat from the unseemly spectacle of judges feuding in public when the court struck down the establishment of speedy military courts and the notification suspending fundamental rights during emergency. Also favourably received was the decision to dilute the complete control vested in a party leader, in defection matters.

The decision of a full court headed by Justice Khaliur Rahman Ramday to strike down the actions of Gen Musharraf in the *Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhary* case worked wonders for the image of the judiciary. Never before in the history of the country had the judges been held in such high esteem.

These gains were slowly but perceptibly frittered away when the court used its *suo moto* and original jurisdiction, as never before, to interfere in matters where no legally manageable judicial standards were available. A large number of judges were removed without any regard to constitutional requirements. Concluded contracts were cancelled, business operations interfered with, buildings demolished, public servants sacked, statutes re-written and dozens of parliamentarians disqualified for life, without due process. Prime minister Yousuf Raza Gillani was

CONTINUATIONS: PAGE 61 ONWARDS

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A CONFLUENCE OF CHALLENGES

MALEEHA LODHI calls for governance that goes well beyond power politics. Perhaps the emergence of new power structures and an assertive urban middle class will finally align governance to public purpose.



SEATO allies Governor-General Ghulam Mohammad and his handpicked Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra huddle together with US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles at the Governor-General's residence in Karachi during Dulles' four-day visit to Karachi on May 22, 1953. (Courtesy: Ghulam Mohammad Archives/Naeem Malik Collection)

PAKISTAN always seems to find itself at a crossroads facing new and more enduring challenges. One path we could have taken was to address these challenges. The other option was to leave the unresolved problems to fester and multiply. Sadly, the first was not the road taken.

Today, the country confronts a number of overlapping governance challenges. They include daunting problems of solvency, security, mounting energy and water shortages, environmental degradation and an increasing youth bulge in an environment of economic stagnation.

This focuses attention on the reasons that got Pakistan here. What has been its political experience that has led to this situation? Lurching from crisis to crisis, the country has lacked a stable and predictable environment to solve its problems. It has not been able to establish a viable political order or evolve a political consensus on strategic priorities that could be translated into policy. It is not experimentation with political systems — parliamentary and presidential — that is responsible for its elusive quest for political stability. Presidential systems were in any case a façade for military rule and little more than vain efforts to ‘civilianise’ political interventions by the armed forces.

A complex interplay among various sets of internal and external factors helps to explain the confluence of challenges — governance, politics and the economy — that continue to confront Pakistan. Complicating the quest to resolve its problems is the impact of external developments on the country's fate and fortunes. The external and the internal have been so intertwined in Pakistan's history as to make its challenges even more complex.

The country's ability to weather the storms of global geopolitics has been repeatedly tested. Dealing with these from a state of domestic fragility has ended up exhausting Pakistan and compounding its difficulties. Its much-acclaimed geostrategic location has been as much a liability as an asset. Successive governments believed, and so did the military, that geography translated into leverage and strength. The fact is that our location at the centre of geopolitical crises only complicated the country's quest for stability.

A REPETITIVE CYCLE

Turning to factors that contributed to its challenges, the most obvious one is the lack of political stability with the country alternating precariously between civilian governments and military rule in a repetitive cycle punctuated by outbreaks of public protests demanding change. Just about half its history has been spent under military rule. Political discontinuity has contributed greatly to its problems. It also bequeathed a legacy of power asymmetry between elected and unelected institutions. This yielded the so-called hybrid arrangement in recent times based on informal power-sharing between the elected government and the military.

The second element comprises governance challenges that are also the result of blowback from the country's protracted foreign engagements during the Cold War and beyond, the impact of great power rivalries and the fault lines of regional geopolitics.

Pakistan's close involvement in the war of unintended consequences following the 1979 Russian invasion of Afghanistan came at an extraordinary cost — the country's own stability. This spawned a pattern of behaviour that was repeated throughout its subse-

quent history. While the country's leaders played geopolitical games that sought to leverage and enhance Pakistan's regional influence, the neglect of pressing problems at home exacted a heavy price.

External overstretch and internal under-reach has been a persistent pattern in Pakistan's history.

The multifaceted fallout of the two long Afghan wars, first during the Soviet invasion bid, and then following the US-led military intervention in 2001, was immensely destabilising for Pakistan. Poor anticipation and management of its consequences as well as some flawed strategies made matters worse.

TYRANNY OF GEOGRAPHY

Another inter-related factor is the product of Pakistan's volatile and tough neighbourhood, with contested and insecure borders. The tyranny of geography imposed a heavy burden. The shadow of a much bigger and hostile neighbour, India, the ‘unfinished business’ of Partition epitomised by the Kashmir dispute, and an unstable Afghanistan on the western border consistently made security the top national priority. This also made the goal of security and deterring India (through conventional military means as well as by the acquisition of nuclear capability) an overwhelming preoccupation.

It involved the inevitable trade-off in which human development needs were accorded secondary importance as public demands for education and health were not adequately met. This meant that while the state's hard power kept increasing, human security fell behind.

Yet another factor contributing to governance challenges emerged from the legacy of sweeping nationalisation undertaken in the 1970s by the country's first elected prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Extensive state intervention in the economy produced the phenomenon of ‘too much government, too little governance’ for decades to come. Mismanagement of a large number of state enterprises also became a drain on the national exchequer. It crowded out private investment, and diverted the already scarce resources away from the social sector, including education.

Losses in these state-owned enterprises run into billions every year and are still met by subsidies and bailouts. This has placed a growing burden on fragile public finances and limited the state's capacity to deal with rising demographic pressures and public needs.

RELIGION & REGIONALISM

Of the continuities in Pakistan's political experience, the issues of religion and regionalism have repeatedly tested the country's unity. The salience of these issues has fluctuated due to shifting politics and state priorities as well as the public response. Religion and regionalism would perhaps not have been continuing sources of tension had efforts to provide effective governance been successful; one that met the economic and social needs of the people. Poor governance created the space for religious schisms and provincial or ethnic sentiment to intensify and find political expression.

Certainly, long periods of military rule magnified resentment among the smaller provinces by centralising and concentrating power, and also because the army was predominantly drawn from one province. Provincial tensions have not just been a reflection of a linguistically and culturally diverse society, they are also reflective of the either the absence or failure of nation-building efforts. They also signify disputes

over the share of financial and natural resources, water and gas, against a backdrop of shortages and rising population. These issues have not disappeared, except that regionalism seems to have receded except for unresolved issues and the sense of deprivation among people in Balochistan.

The influence of religion in national politics has also ebbed and flowed. Since its inception, Pakistan has seen bitter ideological controversies over the role of religion in state and society. But, as historian Ayesha Jalal has pointed out, for the first three decades or more Pakistan functioned as a moderate, liberal state with religion “kept in check” in state affairs.

This changed dramatically with the advent of General Ziaul Haq's military rule. He fused religion and politics to legitimise his regime and carried out a self-assigned campaign to Islamise the country, including its legal and educational system. These policies had serious consequences that polarised society along religious and sectarian lines.

Together with the role the country played in the Afghan war, this spawned extremist tendencies in society. It also left enduring effects on the social fabric. But the paradox in subsequent years was that though religious parties did not do well at the ballot box, the influence they wielded was much greater in the country's politics. This disproportionate influence resulted in their patronage by national power centres.

Violent extremism and militancy on the other hand had both external and internal dimensions and drivers. This again underlined how the two intersected to compound Pakistan's problems. Their rise is closely linked to Pakistan's role in the war in Afghanistan against the Soviets. This brought a witch's brew of problems, including over three million refugees, proliferation of weapons, spread of narcotics, exponential growth of seminaries and militancy.

Another driver was Saudi-Iran tensions and rivalry in the 1980s and beyond, their sponsorship of organisations and seminaries and funnelling of money to sectarian groups of choice. This spawned sectarian tensions and violence, which has punctuated Pakistan's history.

The way the post-9/11 war in Afghanistan was conducted by the US-led coalition exacerbated Pakistan's security problems, pushing the conflict into its border regions and leading to the emergence of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The spreading militant influence in the frontier region prompted the launch of a series of military actions by the army, the largest antiterrorism campaigns anywhere in the world.

This went through several phases and finally succeeded in clearing these areas and dismantling terrorist bases. But the security threat from the TTP continues to this day in the form of cross-border attacks against Pakistani military personnel as the militant organisation remains based in Taliban-run Afghanistan.

DYSFUNCTIONAL ECONOMIC POLICIES

A major contributory factor for present-day challenges and a consistent feature of Pakistan's history has been the reliance by successive governments — both civilian and military — on dysfunctional economic policies. This involves excessive borrowing rather than mobilising domestic resources to address the country's widening budget and balance of payments deficits.

Here, too, external and internal factors intersected. In earlier decades, Pakistan's Cold War alliance with the

West provided the policymakers the means to finance deficits with soft loans. Successive governments — dominated by rural and urban elites — therefore found the means to avoid reforms, raise sufficient revenue and tax themselves and their supporters. The dependence on external resources to finance both development and consumption was thus both encouraged and facilitated by the availability of concessional assistance as a consequence of the country's foreign alignments.

Cold War assistance accompanied Pakistan's close alliance with the US under military pacts such as Seato and Cento. In the 1980s Western aid flowed as a strategic payback for Pakistan's pivotal role in resisting and rolling back the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The 9/11 incident again increased Pakistan's strategic importance for Washington, which mobilised international efforts to provide financial resources and IMF financing for budgetary support as well as debt restructuring to ease Islamabad's economic problems.

BORROWED GROWTH

The result was aid-fuelled economic growth during much of the Zia period and then again during the military dispensation of Gen Pervez Musharraf, which created an illusion of economic progress. This borrowed growth may not necessarily have had such deleterious consequences if the fiscal space it provided was used to launch reforms to solve the underlying structural problems of the economy: broadening the tax net, documenting the economy, diversifying the export base, and encouraging savings to finance a level of investment that could sustain an economic growth rate higher than the rise in population. But none of this happened.

The availability of external resources along with high levels of remittances from overseas Pakistanis simply enabled the country to paper over the structural problems of the economy. Economic management relying on someone else's money permitted the country's rulers to postpone the much-needed structural reforms that could have placed the economy on a viable, self-reliant path. Once concessional financing began to taper off, it was replaced by expensive foreign and domestic borrowing. This phase of borrowed growth was unsustainable, and led to the accumulation of enormous debt.

It was during the 1980s that the budgetary resource crisis emerged as a chronic threat to Pakistan's financial stability. The year 1985 marked a sharp break in Pakistan's budgetary history, with revenue no longer matching even the government's current expenditure. For the next decade and beyond, successive governments borrowed heavily to finance not only development but also consumption. In the process, the country accumulated unsustainable debt both by borrowing abroad and at home. This burden continues to cripple the economy today.

Successive civilian and military governments were unwilling to mobilise resources and preferred instead to pursue pain-free ways to manage public finances. This of course can be explained in terms of a governing elite or privileged class averse to measures that they felt would erode their position or threaten their class or corporate interests.

Pakistan's political history has been replete with governance failures and lost opportunities. But there have also been positive changes in the political and

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THE FACADE OF TRUE REPRESENTATION

To move towards a functioning democracy, Pakistan’s power elites will have to acknowledge the primacy of Parliament and respect the rules of representative government, posits AHMED BILAL MEHBOOB.



Ayub Khan makes the inaugural address at the West Pakistan Basic Democracy Convention on January 29, 1962 at the Punjab Assembly building in Lahore. Governor of West Pakistan, Malik Amir Mohammad Khan Kalabagh, is seated at his right. (Courtesy: Ayub Khan Archives/Tahir Ayub Collection)

IT makes every Pakistani immensely proud that the country came into being through a democratic process, but it remains to be seen whether we carried the process through and used it to become a developed society.

The All-India Muslim League (AIML), which claimed to be the only representative of Indian Muslims and advocated for a separate homeland for Muslims, had contested the election for the Legislative Assemblies in undivided India in 1945. The AIML had swept the election, as it polled over 75pc of the Muslim votes and won 460 out of 533 Muslim seats in the central and provincial elections. The result of the election was not only an unequivocal endorsement of the AIML’s claim as the sole representative of Indian Muslims, it also proved beyond doubt that the Muslims of India were solidly behind the demand for Pakistan.

The Constituent Assembly of undivided India — which came into existence as a result of the 1945 election for the purpose of framing a constitution for united India — had to be split into two to cater to the legislative needs of the two new states. The 389-member Constituent Assembly of undivided India gave birth to Pakistan’s first constituent assembly consisting of 69 members. The assembly members were later increased to 79 to give representation to Balochistan, the Tribal Areas and the newly acceded states of Bahawalpur and Khairpur.

The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan met for its maiden session on August 10, 1947, in Karachi, and elected Jogendra Nath Mandal, a member of the minority community of East Pakistan, as its first chairman. Although this was an interim arrangement and Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah was elected President of the assembly the next day, the election of a member of the minority community as the first chairman of the first Constituent Assembly of a state created in the name of religion carried huge symbolic value.

The first Constituent Assembly was an indirectly elected house whose Muslim members were elected by the Muslim members of the regions included in Pakistan. Non-Muslim members were elected by the non-Muslim members of the same provincial assemblies. The Muslim League with 59 members was the largest parliamentary party comprising predominantly Muslim members, followed by the Congress Party, whose majority consisted of non-Muslims. East Bengal had 44 members, followed by 22 members from Punjab, five from Sindh, three from the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), and one each from Balochistan, Bahawalpur, Khairpur and the Tribal Areas.

The Assembly was charged with two responsibilities: to frame a constitution for Pakistan, and to act as the Federal Legislature. The assembly, sadly, could not complete the primary task of framing a constitution by the time it was dissolved more than seven years later on Oct 24, 1954, by Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad in rage after Prime Minister Mohammad Ali Bogra tried to clip some of his wide-ranging powers through the legislature.

Two important developments during the proceedings of the first Constituent Assembly did, however, leave a lasting imprint on the future course of the nation. The first were the remarks of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, which he gave while addressing the first Constituent Assembly after his election as its president on August 11, 1947. Although it was not

a prepared speech, the remarks gave an important insight into the founder’s vision about the new state.

The second most significant development was the passage of the Objectives Resolution, which was applauded by the clergy, but there were many within the Assembly and outside, especially in East Pakistan, who considered it a deviation from Jinnah’s vision as outlined in that very Constituent Assembly.

The non-Muslim members moved several amendments to the resolution and even proposed that the resolution be circulated to elicit public opinion. Voting on these amendments was sharply divided along religious lines. All Muslim members except two opposed the amendments, whereas all non-Muslim members supported the moves. As eminent constitutional lawyer Hamid Khan wrote in book ‘*Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*’ (2017), “one cannot escape the conclusion that the Resolution might have sown the seeds of suspicion, alienation and distrust among the minorities against the majority.”

Sadly, there was no clarity of vision, agreed state direction or a documented social contract during the life of the first Constituent Assembly.

The 80-member second Constituent Assembly was also indirectly elected by the provincial assemblies, with special arrangements made for the election of representatives from federal capital Karachi, Balochistan, the acceded states and Tribal Areas, which did not have legislatures at the time.

Since the Muslim League was routed in the 1954 provincial election in East Pakistan where it could get only 10 seats in a house of 309, it could muster only one seat from there to the second Constituent Assembly. As a consequence, the League lost even a simple majority in the house. Finally, a coalition of the Muslim League and the United Front was formed, with Chaudhry Muhammad Ali being the prime minister.

The key accomplishment of the assembly was to take the unfinished business of the previous assembly to fruition and finally pass a Constitution, on Feb 29, 1956. Another significant step of far-reaching consequences was the merging of all the federating units in the western wing into one unit, which was formally named as West Pakistan.

Although the Constitution was passed and, as a result, the country became the ‘Islamic Republic of Pakistan’, the bitterness generated by the One Unit dispensation did not go away. A sizable lobby in East Pakistan remained dissatisfied with the arrangement of so-called parity and the quantum of provincial autonomy provided in the 1956 Constitution.

Had the democratic process continued, the source of dissatisfaction could have been addressed in time. But before the first general election, scheduled for February 1959, could be held, the country had its first military intervention in October 1958.

Armed with the dictatorial powers, General Ayub Khan devised a new Constitution in 1962 without any meaningful participation by public representatives. Any semblance of provincial autonomy stood removed, and the resulting alienation in East Pakistan produced disastrous consequences.

The first general elections that were scheduled to be held in 1959 were actually held 11 years later in 1970, when it had to elect yet another assembly to frame the constitution for a united Pakistan. In those elections, East Pakistan gave an overwhelming mandate to

Sheikh Mujibur Rehman’s Awami League (AL), which won all but two National Assembly seats there. The AL, which had contested the election on the basis of its Six-Point agenda, fielded six candidates in West Pakistan as a symbolic participation, but none came even close to winning.

In West Pakistan, the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) won the highest number of seats, mostly from Punjab. The PPP had not put up any candidate in an East Pakistan constituency. The pattern of candidates and the seats won by the two most popular parties clearly indicated the course of the coming events.

Several rounds of two-way and three-way negotiations were held involving President Yahya Khan, Mujib and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to somehow begin the formal session of the National Assembly, but the latter two had their specific reservations, leading to an impasse. One wanted assurances beforehand, the other wanted to move forward towards the draft constitution.

Perhaps the greatest folly was that the Legal Framework Order (LFO) had not specified whether the constitution would be approved by a simple or two-third majority in the Assembly. Had the requirement of two-third majority been incorporated, the LFO would have nudged the two parties to cooperate with each other and make due compromises.

After the tragedy of 1971, the ‘Pakistani part’ of the National Assembly, consisting of 146-members, went on to first adopt an interim constitution on April 21, 1972, and later passed the Constitution of Pakistan on April 12, 1973, which was the first to be framed in Pakistan by a National Assembly directly elected on the principle of one-man-one vote through a relatively fair election.

The next elections, held in 1977, led to the imposition of martial law by Army Chief Gen Ziaul Haq after deadlock between the PPP and the opposition Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) over election rigging.

The next National Assembly elections were held on Feb 25, 1985, on a non-party basis. Zia probably thought it would be easier to control parliament without the influence exercised by political parties on their members. The non-party elections and PPP’s boycott created conditions where many new local government-level politicians made it to the assembly and continued to focus more on municipal issues rather than national-level policy matters.

The decision by the government of Mohammad Khan Junejo to provide funds to legislators for local development further enhanced the focus of national legislators on local issues — a phenomenon which has continued to haunt subsequent legislatures. The non-party nature of election accentuated the influence of extended families, tribes, castes and sects in electoral politics.

The subsequent elections to the National Assembly in 1988, 1990, 1993 and 1997 publicly exposed the role played by intelligence agencies and the security establishment in Pakistan’s electoral politics. Lt-Gen Hamid Gul, who headed the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) from May 1987 to May 1989, publicly admitted his and ISI’s role in the creation of right-wing Islami Jamhoori Ittihad (IJI) to defeat Benazir Bhutto and her PPP in the 1988 general elections. Lt-Gen Asad Durrani, who headed the ISI from August 1990 to March 1992, submitted an affidavit that he, on behalf of ISI and as instructed by then Army Chief Gen Aslam Beg, received

huge sums of money from a banker and distributed various sums of money to IJI leaders to help the party win the 1990 election.

All such actions of the establishment were further recorded and discussed during the famous Asghar Khan case. Although documentary evidence for the establishment’s interference in subsequent parliamentary elections was not as explicit, there is ample anecdotal and circumstantial evidence to point in that direction. As a result, almost all parliaments in Pakistan faced the allegation of being the product of rigging in elections.

The frequent disruption of parliamentary proceedings, the constitutional breakdown during the vote of no-confidence against prime minister Imran Khan, and just about everything that has happened in its wake has brought the state of Pakistani parliament and the notion of representative government into sharp focus.

Successive governments and parliaments in Pakistan have been facing serious questions of legitimacy and competence over the years. No prime minister has been able to complete the full five-year term in national history. Parliamentarians hardly pay attention to business within parliament and the assemblies are frequently found to be lacking quorum.

This is so because parliamentarians devote a major part of their time and energies to attend to their voters’ personal issues, like jobs, promotions, dealings with local administration and police, and to local municipal issues, such as water, sanitation, roads, etc.

Most legislators resent effective local governments and consider them an encroachment of ‘their’ turf. As a result, the absence of functioning local governments adds to the burden of legislators and distracts them from their primary roles of legislation, oversight of the executive, and representation of their constituents’ views on national policy issues.

Lack of democracy within political parties acts as a major obstacle in the induction of fresh blood into parties and good performance of elected legislators. To top it all, the long-entrenched practice of extra-political interference — partly real and partly perceived — remains an issue that has no end in sight.

If we want to move forward towards a functioning democracy which delivers good governance and sets the country on the path of accelerated development, we need to cover a lot of ground. To begin with, powerful institutions and intelligence agencies have to limit their remit to within the constitutional boundaries. Without establishing a rules-based society, no institution will be able to perform effectively.

Besides, voters will have to move beyond their emotional attachment to individual leaders and vote for parties on the basis of their programmes. Voters should demand hard evidence of party programmes and competent teams able to effectively and efficiently address governance issues.

Political parties should form their shadow cabinets so that voters may ascertain their preparedness to solve pressing economic and social problems over time. A long-awaited paradigm shift is needed in the way we perceive politics, parliament and representative government.

The writer is President of the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development And Transparency (Pildat).

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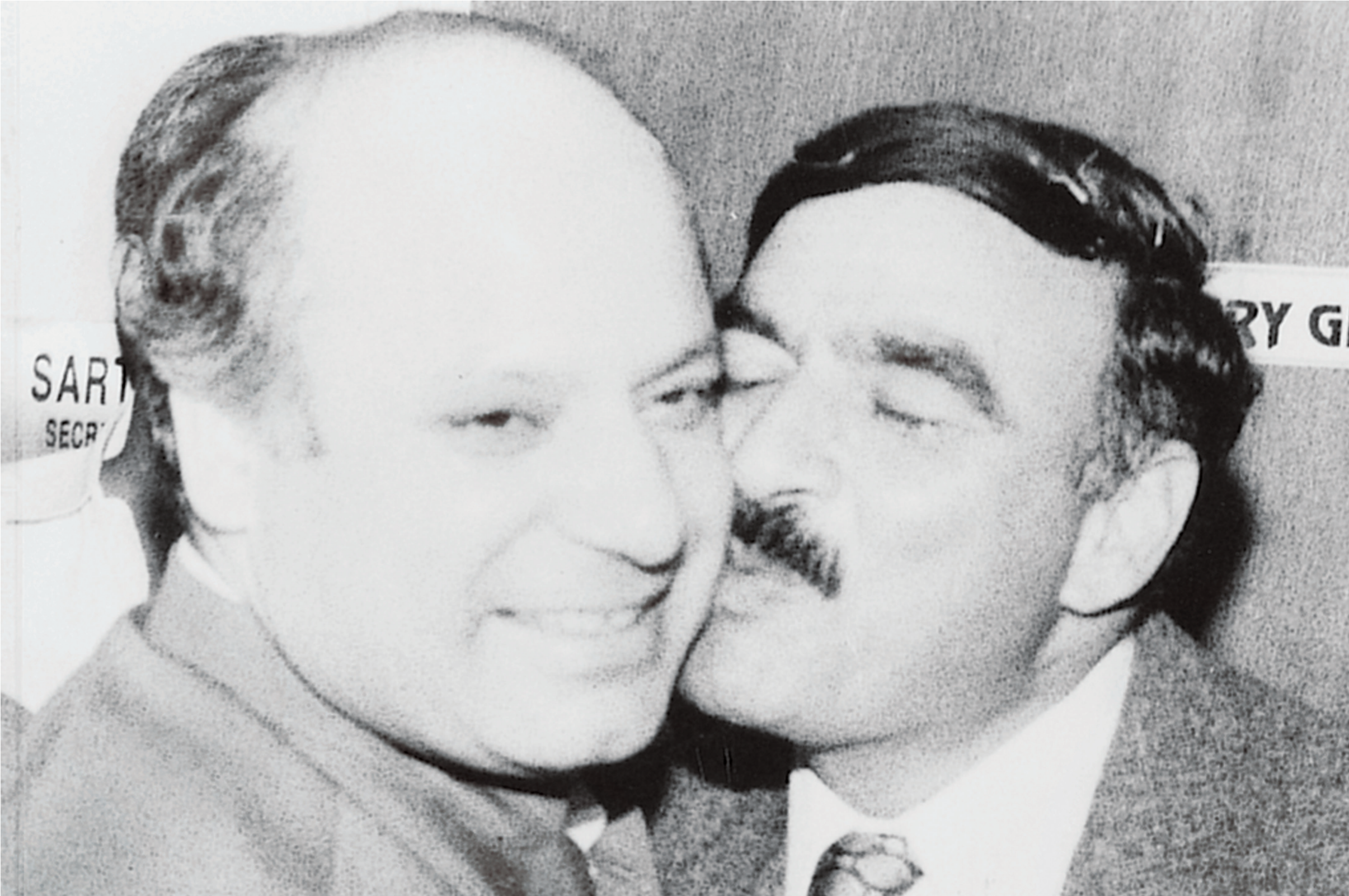
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THE UNBEARABLE POLITICS OF STASIS

Dynastic politics and factionalism reflect a worsening dynamic within Pakistani political parties but DR SHUJA MAHESAR believes that we may have reached a stasis in our democratic evolution.



Sheikh Rashid Ahmed seen here planting a resounding kiss on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s cheek long before he moved on to form his own party. The story of politics in Pakistan is riddled with such stories.

POLITICAL parties are considered central to statecraft, and they shape attitudes, beliefs and values of the political culture to support the working of the political system. When it comes to Pakistan, the first political party was launched long before the country actually got its independence in 1947. The establishment of the All-India Muslim League (AIML) in 1906 was a Muslim expression of identity. The rationale behind forming the League was the failure of the Indian National Congress (INC) to adequately represent Muslims.

The credibility and acceptance of the well-knit AIML increased under the leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. His political wisdom, unflappability, determination, unwavering commitment and sincere leadership gave hope and confidence to a depressed community. Jinnah was able to communicate his vision clearly, to relate to the masses with empathy, and to steer the AIML through rocky patches. He possessed an extra je ne sais quoi as well as a spark to ignite the inspiration of the masses.

The AIML’s freedom movement gained strength once the British recognised the Muslim community as a separate political identity. Muslims were allowed a separate electorate under the Minto-Morley reforms. Attempts were made to clear the way for a parliamentary democracy under the Montague-Chelmsford reforms and, after a series of constitutional and political developments, the provincial autonomy demanded under Jinnah’s 14 points was granted through the Government of India Act, 1935, which is considered a high watermark in the process of democratisation in the subcontinent.

The AIML participated in the 1937 elections and learnt a great deal about electoral politics. Three years later, in 1940, the party transformed itself into a mass movement and orchestrated the demand for a separate country. Once the goal of a separate homeland was achieved, it again changed into a political party named the All-Pakistan Muslim League (APML).

DECLINE OF THE LEAGUE

After the creation of Pakistan, the party leadership got engaged in nation-building activities and the organisation itself thus received less attention than it deserved. As a result, the League’s reputation began to decline. The need was soon felt for a reorganisation, and the task went to Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman, who naturally did not have the flair or the capacity of Jinnah.

The creation of various factions in the provinces resulted in further degeneration. The party missed the opportunity to implement land reforms, and created confusion about foreign policy. However, efforts were made to build democratic institutions and the constituent assembly was given the task to frame a constitution for the new country, which came almost a decade after its birth in 1956. The party was unable to keep the pre-partition momentum and its image took a nosedive in the years ahead.

RISE OF THE CONTENDERS

The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), a competitor of the Muslim League, had also been active in the political battleground. It was founded by Maulana Abul Ala Maududi in 1941. After the creation of Pakistan, it split into two main organisations: Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan and Jamaat-e-Islami Hind.

It continued to work as a political party based on religious ideology.

The JI largely drew its inspirations from the thoughts and beliefs of its founder. The election manifesto of the party sought social, economic and political rights. It was not opposed to modern techniques and methods of production, but its policy on the factors of production did not make it any different from the other political parties. It ensured the sanctity of private property and remained concerned about the way these properties were acquired. The party was an advocate of state intervention in the moral and spiritual realm rather than in the economic sphere.

Another contender, the Awami League, was founded in 1949. Its popularity grew rapidly, and the Six Points of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman started being treated as political scripture among its support base. The party began promoting ethnic politics with the rise of Bengali nationalism.

DISINTEGRATION

Over the 1950s and 1960s, the politics of the country revolved around identity, and thus demands for the protection of languages and cultures of various regions became major points of agenda for nationalist parties. These demands were fuelled by the centralisation of power and denial of provincial autonomy under the One Unit scheme launched in 1955. The scheme was described as a means of integration, but it proved counterproductive in the sense that it created the ethnic divide which later caused the dismemberment of the country.

Mainstream political parties, like the League, were unable to sensibly address ethnicity and language controversies. Nationalism and provincialism grew out of the political uncertainty and economic disparity created by the ruling elite, who preferred bureaucratic solutions over political dialogue as a method of conflict resolution.

During the 1960s, the bureaucracy had played a political role and was a major collaborator in the military regime led by Gen Ayub Khan. The civil service established its dominance in much the same way the colonial bureaucracy had monopolised power. It meddled in politics and sabotaged efforts to strengthen democracy at the grassroots level.

In the absence of strong local government institutions, elite service officers exercised huge administrative, judicial, financial and political powers. However, they were unable to positively contribute to the development of institutions. Also, they were not too keen to implement reforms which could radically change their status and power in society.

A NEW START

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a shrewd politician, was able to read the situation clearly, and formed the Pakista People’s Party (PPP) in 1967 with the help of political thinkers like J.A. Rahim and Dr Mubashir Hassan.

The manifesto of Bhutto’s party was a blend of Islamic socialism and egalitarianism. It introduced a new political culture and generated fresh political ideas that attracted a large number of people, resulting in electoral success at the 1970 elections. A new Constitution was framed under the PPP in 1973, and it was adopted with parliamentary consensus. The Constitution has survived two military regimes and has been a source of political stability for nearly a half-century.

However, the party was criticised for its inability to become internally democratic and for making compromises to avoid consequences unacceptable to the leadership. It made several amendments to the Constitution to deal with one threat or the other to the government.

The party also introduced civil service and land reforms, but they were not implemented owing to political instability. His government faced bitter opposition from the National Awami Party (NAP), which was banned in 1975.

In 1977, the party again secured an impressive victory against the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), which was an electoral arrangement involving all the key opposition parties. There were allegations of electoral rigging, and soon there were wheel-jam strikes across the country.

THE ZIA ERA

The lingering turmoil on a national scale provided Gen Ziaul Haq, the army chief, an opportunity to intervene. Bhutto was taken into ‘protective custody’, then sent to jail and finally to the gallows. Zia made changes to the Constitution and introduced new laws with no regard for Pakistan’s social complexities.

Matters began to change when Gen Zia started manipulating religion as a political tool to extend his stay in power. The ‘religionisation’ of politics produced an unstoppable wave of radicalisation in the country. The social structure underwent major upheaval due to religious and political intolerance, which continues to be reflected in our religio-political parties today.

In 1981, the PPP brought together multiple parties together on the platform of the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) to challenge the Zia regime. Political workers were arrested, tortured and killed at various places.

In 1986, the PPP got a new lease of life when Benazir Bhutto returned to the country from abroad to a massive welcome in Lahore. She led the party in difficult times and gradually carved out a place in the corridors of power.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

Benazir became the first woman prime minister of Pakistan – indeed, of the entire Islamic world – after her party’s victory in the 1988 elections. Her first tenure, however, was cut short when president Ghulam Ishaq Khan, using powers vested in him under Article 58(2)(B) of the Constitution, dismissed the National Assembly. This was the first time he had used the said clause, but he would use it again in 1993 to send Nawaz Sharif home.

Within eight years, from 1988 to 1996, the country went to the polls four times. It was as if we were compensating for all the elections that we had not held in our history. These elections threw up four governments; two each headed by the PPP and the Nawaz faction of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N).

In political terms, the concoction of Islami Jamhoori Ittihad (IJI) remains the most remarkable factor; remarkable for in later years it exposed the scale and dynamics of the machinations that go behind the curtains to have a ‘government if choice’.

After the flurry of elections, however, came the fourth military intervention when Gen Pervez

Musharraf sent the PML-N government packing after the Kargil episode.

POST-9/11

The 9/11 attacks significantly affected global politics. For Pakistan, it meant significant challenges as well as opportunities for the military ruler to prolong his rule. On the back of success in a referendum, which was obviously a technique he had learned from his predecessor Zia, he went about his business, creating newer titles like PML-Q and PPP Patriots to provide his parliament legitimacy. The religious parties for the first time formed an alliance of their own and called it the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA).

The biggest shock during the Musharraf era, however, was the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2007 when she returned to the country yet again to lead her party in the 2008 elections. Her husband Asif Ali Zardari subsequently took charge and led the PPP to electoral victory. It formed an alliance with the Awami National Party (ANP) and formed a government that became the first in national history to complete a five-year term. That it took the country more than six decades to hit that landmark is in itself a potent indicator of what and how things have been like in the political spectrum.

A NEW PLAYER

The PML-N secured a majority in the 2013 elections. However, the greatest rise in political stocks was noticed for the Pakistan Tehreek i-Insaf (PTI), which had spent considerable time as a non-entity but had been gathering support for some time. It formed the provincial government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and started eyeing Islamabad from there. It did get there after achieving success in the 2018 elections, but only after it brought quite a few independent candidates, and entered into alliances with political and ideological opponents, like the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) and the PML-Q.

The latest political nomenclature in the country is the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) which is a combination of political forces trying to counter the PTI narrative. As the country celebrates 75 years of its independence, political uncertainty remains the key word in its national narrative.

Political parties are central to statecraft, and it is, therefore, a travesty that we not only have an inept political system, but a looming crisis of leadership. Most parties remain reluctant to promote intra-party polls, which discourages the emergence of new leadership.

Political parties generally have three objectives: secure public support, capture power, and deliver services to the people as per the aspirations of the voters and supporters. In Pakistan, political parties are more focussed on the first two objectives and less concerned about the last one, which is actually more important for their survival.

Debate on public issues, constructive criticism and political tolerance needs to be promoted. Likewise, indecency in political behaviour, needless political confrontation, and a culture of character assassination rampant in our prevailing political culture must be discouraged through available democratic, legal and media forums.

Further, respect for the principle of constitutionalism is a collective responsibility of all political parties. The parties must demonstrate courage and stop any major or minor constitutional violation by the power elite.

The author is Director, Pakistan Study Centre, University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

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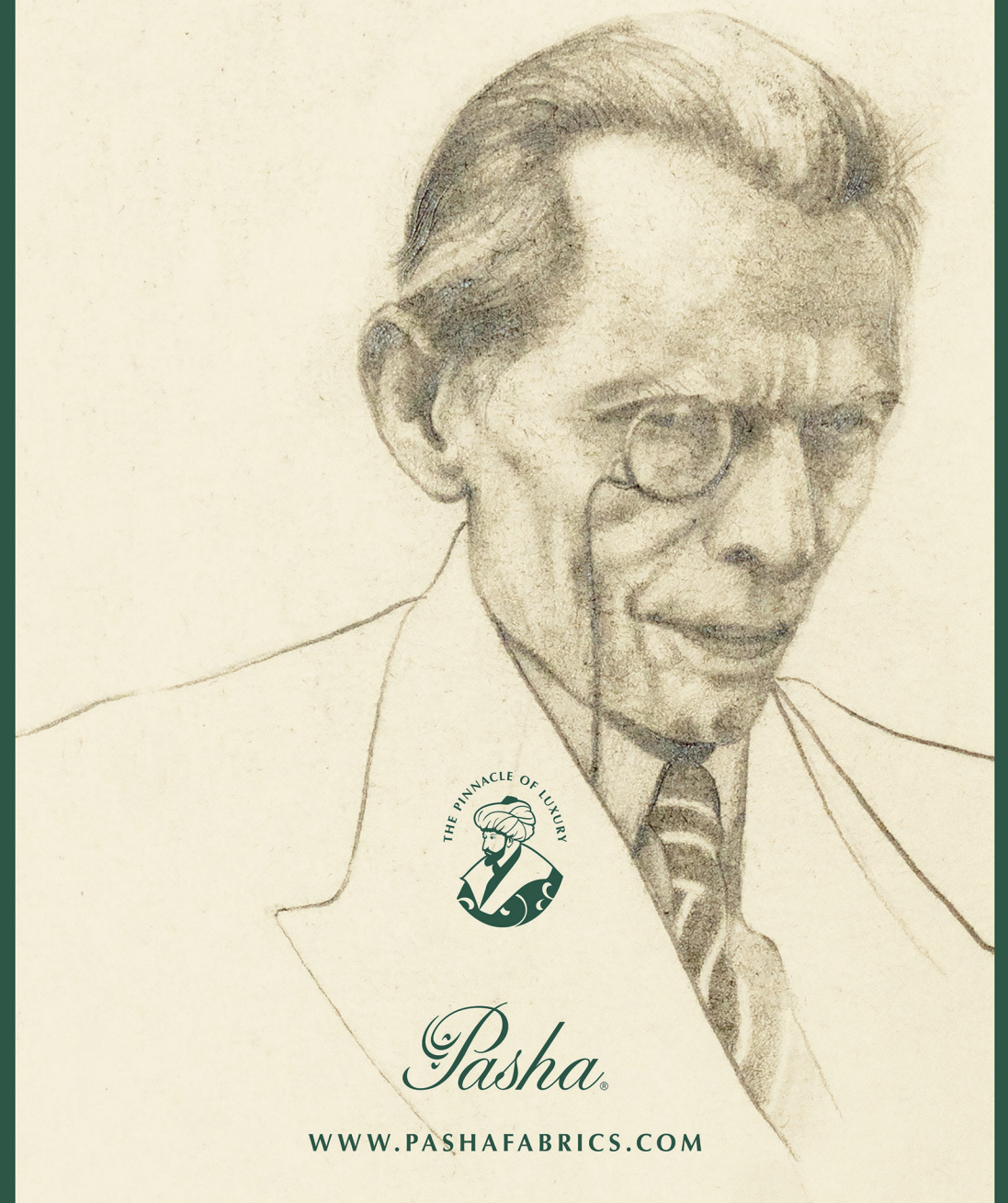
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CULT OF CHARISMA

ARIFA NOOR analyses how Pakistani leaders arise from the crucible of economic change. They may not command an electoral majority but every one of them has had an outsized impact on the national polity.



Photo courtesy: DEMP Islamabad

The charismatic prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto delivers a stirring address from a public rostrum, emblazoned above with the kalma and below with the slogan ‘Aaj bhi Bhutto jeetay ga’ in the mid-1970s.

On a Sunday night in an unusually warm Ramazan, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) supporters poured out onto the streets on the call of Imran Khan, the party head and former prime minister. The size and the mood of the April 2022 protests took nearly everyone by surprise.

A politician from the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) recounted a conversation with a colleague regarding what gathering a crowd means for their own party: call the MNA, who calls the MPs, who then push the ones below them to get the people out. Busses have to be rented and paid for and so on. “Would we be able to issue a call and then just sit back,” one of them asked the other.

It was not just the opposition that felt under pressure. A PTI leader from Punjab said his constituents questioned him because they had not seen any pictures showing him facing the police or being teargassed during the long march. He was pointedly asked whether or not he was there to support Imran Khan.

There is no shortage of such stories these days. Is there a genuine movement for democracy that we see, or just a privileged and vocal Imran Khan fan club in action?

In an effort to understand the PTI brand of politics, we have used and misused political terms. He is a transformational or charismatic leader for those who admire him, and a cultist or populist for his critics. Yet, if we take the value judgements out of those descriptions, what are we left with? A leader with a popular support base.

The phenomenon is easier to understand if, instead of the leader, one were to focus on the support base: why it exists and what brings it about. This is an approach that can and has helped make sense of the periods of change in the subcontinent from the time of Mohammad Ali Jinnah to the present.

Instead of leaders creating popular support, it is, in fact, the people who mark their leader. The real transformation is the socio-economic one, which then shapes politics. This is why Hamza Alavi is still relevant for having pointed out the link between the ‘salarial’ and the emergence of Pakistan.

He argued — unlike others, who focussed on the religious motives — that the salary-dependant class of Muslim government servants, the ‘salarial’, led the movement for Pakistan because they thought to gain from it. This educated class, which was dependant on state jobs rather than inherited land or physical labour for a living, was initially created as a result of the colonial state. But as it was also dependant on the state for its future, the fear that it would lose out on its fair share of jobs pushed it to support an independent country for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

This is not to say that religion was not a factor; it was. But it was socio-economic change which created a new class of citizens, who then backed the movement for a separate state and found in Jinnah a leader who could lead it to success.

That Jinnah was once the greatest proponent of Hindu-Muslim unity, or that he left the Congress because he was not in favour of populist politics, or that he was more comfortable in English than the languages spoken in Bengal or Punjab or even by the would-be Karachiites were side issues. He personified the change brought about by colonial rule and was best placed to stake claim on behalf of all those who had a dream for a separate homeland. Once Jinnah decided to lead the movement, he was savvy enough to understand the importance of optics. Hence, the decision to exchange Savile Row suits for a sherwani, and speeches in Urdu even if he was not fluent or comfortable.

He eventually led a minority to independence and a new country, creating history in the process. In doing so, he seems to have set a pattern for politics in Pakistan: in purely electoral terms, those who emerge in the land of the pure as popular leaders tend usually to enjoy the support of a minority. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was perhaps the only exception for he led a numerical majority in East Pakistan against a powerful minority in West Pakistan. But this was an exception, not the rule.

By and large, the trend that has propped up again and again in Pakistani politics entails socio-economic change which is followed by urban protests, and a popular leader is chosen by the people, who may not necessarily be supported by the majority of the voters.

THE POPULIST BHUTTO

It took 25 years after Jinnah for Pakistan to experience the second popular wave brought about, again, through socio-economic changes



Photo: Tanveer Shahzad

Imran Khan hurls challenges from his container rostrum against the PMLN government during his protest in Islamabad in 2014. (Courtesy: White Star Photo)

wrought by a regime far from being democratic and legitimate.

The rapid economic transformation under Ayub Khan’s government led to considerable socio-economic change. Industrialisation and land reforms led to the emergence of industrial workers, a peasantry and left-wing students who not only felt empowered enough to want a better life, but also marginalised within the status quo.

As one account puts it, “... two groups of people were affected considerably: disenchanted landlords, who suffered relatively compared to the industrialists ... and a new petty bourgeoisie, mainly professionals, and a fairly large middle peasant, who raised their expectations under the Green Revolution of the Punjab ... It was in this background that Bhutto formed a new alliance of landlords, petty bourgeoisie and young radicals ...”

That Bhutto was able to become the face of this changing society, even though he had not been the one to set the ball rolling, was a sort of parallel to Jinnah’s story in the sense that they both left their former leanings and shifted to the other sides; from Congress to the League, and from pro-Ayub to anti-Ayub. In doing so, Bhutto formed the Pakistan People’s Party, to fill the void that had been repeatedly pointed out by left-leaning individuals and groups.

Just as Jinnah’s time in the Congress had given him a stature and profile that the others lacked in the League, Bhutto’s time under Ayub before he became his harshest critic had given him a kind of stature which perhaps the more ideologically committed people lacked.

Like Jinnah, Bhutto wooed and won over a minority in a larger nation, leading to a fracture and a redrawing of borders. But whereas Jinnah ensured an independent state for his minority, Bhutto formed a government because the majority, led by Mujib, seceded and formed its own state.

Bhutto did not live for long, but the people whose dreams and aspirations he gave voice to continued to hope and believe in him. Aitzaz Ahsan tells the story of Shukardin, a landless peasant from Gujrat. During the 1977 election, Ahsan and others were discussing how to counter Chaudhry Zahoor Elahi, who in a recent *jalsa* in Gujrat had attacked Bhutto, among other things, for being privileged and using a plane while he claimed to speak for the poor. Shukardin tried to interject, but was shushed each time. Finally, when Ahsan turned to Shukardin and encouraged him to give his point of view, he said, “*Bhutto san awaaz diti ae, shanakht diti ae*” (he has given us a voice, an identity). No one heard our voice before, but we can now stand up in front of the deputy commissioner and the commissioner, he added. For the poor man, this was enough to vindicate Bhutto and counter any criticism of the politician. A short story which encapsulates those times and Bhutto’s place in them.

This belief in Bhutto led his daughter, Benazir, to three more victories in Punjab, though in the midst of this, the socio-economic changes brought about under Gen Ziaul Haq, another military dictator, led to the emergence of another leader.

AN UNLIKELY LEADER

Nawaz Sharif, like Bhutto, cut his teeth in politics during a dictatorship — but unlike him, he was not the obvious choice as a popular leader. Initially part of a motley crew of politicians and parties brought together in 1988 as a counterforce to the PPP, he was eventually able to emerge as the one man capable of challenging Benazir’s popularity in Punjab. Uncomfortable in the limelight, a poor speaker and with none of the charisma one associates with the Bhuttos, he was an unlikely contender; though, like those who came before him, he too first swung into power despite not having won over a majority.

Over time, he found his groove and became the face of the force opposing Benazir and her PPP in the biggest province of the country. He was able to do this because, once again, rapid development under a military dictator had changed Punjab, and its newly emerging classes found a leader in Nawaz.

Coupled with the development was the impact of the oil-rich Gulf states, which had attracted labour from Pakistan. The growing Islamisation by Zia, funded to a large extent by the money flowing in from the Gulf states, as well as remittances due to labour migration, led to the emergence of a conservative, religious merchant class. This formed the support base for Nawaz and his faction of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), squeezing the space for the PPP.

Nawaz’s leadership remained more limited than Bhutto’s or even Imran Khan’s, for it never really crossed provincial borders and was concentrated around GT Road. Was this because of his party’s initial self-identification as Punjabi to counter Benazir, or because of the sheer numbers in central Punjab, which made it complacent?

For Umair Javed, who teaches at LUMS, “Nawaz’s social popularity originates from his social conservatism (Muslim, but in a very culturally grounded way that appeals to lower middle-class voters), latent Punjabi ethnic nationalism, and the perception that he knows how to ‘manage’ the public bureaucracy.”

Nawaz never really towered over the national landscape in the same manner as did the Bhuttos, and consequently was more comfortable forming alliances with smaller, nationalist parties.

Around the same time, the country also witnessed the rise of another populist: Altaf Hussain. The flamboyant speaker captured the Urdu-speaking vote in Sindh’s urban areas and in time became a key player in national politics. His hold on his followers was closer in a sense to that of Bhutto. He was a leader chosen by a people who felt threatened socio-economically, and felt they deserved more. If the Ayub period had shifted the capital away from Karachi, setting off their fears of alienation, the quota system introduced by Bhutto and the Sindhi Language Act had added to their sense of deprivation.

Altaf was able to not just give voice to their fears, but also convince them that ethnic cohesion combined with an aggressive posture would

CONTINUATIONS: PAGE 61 ONWARDS

CHRONICLE OF A RESILIENT DEMOCRACY

Pakistan's history has been marked by cycles of dictatorship followed by limited democracy. The people have indicated time and again their wish for representative governance, not autocratic rule, contends ABBAS NASIR.



Photo: Azhar Jaffery

In 1983 the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy launched a stringent series of protests against the military dictatorship of President Ziaul Haq. Here, women protestors in Lahore are witnessed in a fierce roundup by a contingent of the Punjab police. (Courtesy: White Star Photo)

IF it is true that unelected institutions and their leaders have always tried to monopolise and wield power using a wide variety of tools from guns and tanks to a weaponised judiciary to surrogate politicians in the country, it is equally true that democratic resilience, buoyed by popular support, has outwitted its antagonists, the autocrats. It is doubly tragic then that, in each case, this win is temporary, transitory, and the empire always strikes back and regains lost ground. Let me start with my earliest memory which dates back to when I was in school, Grade III/IV at the St Mary's Academy, Lalazar, Rawalpindi.

"The Field Marshal says he isn't going anywhere," my father told us as he returned from the GHQ Auditorium one evening, where Ayub Khan had just addressed all senior officers posted in Rawalpindi against the backdrop of reports that he may quit as he was facing unprecedented countrywide protests. This must have been early March 1969.

The protest seemed to have followed a reminder that he had been in power for 10 years, as the so-called Decade of Development was officially celebrated in 1968. Despite his resolve, he was gone in a matter of days and his commander-in-chief Gen Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan took over and became the chief martial law administrator (CMLA) after fears of a civil war erupting in the East Wing emerged, given the intensity of the protests there.

FATIMA JINNAH'S DEFEAT

In 1965 Ayub won a rigged (indirect) presidential election against Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah. As Ms Jinnah addressed her election meetings across the then East Pakistan, Shaikh Mujibur Rehman was seen by her side, campaigning for her. But the election result seemed to have convinced Mujib that if Quaid-i-Azam's sister was not allowed to win an election in Pakistan, despite her immense popular support, Mujib's dream of securing the rights of the Bangla people would always remain unfulfilled if he fought by the army-led West Pakistan's rules.

Hence, the intensity of the anti-Ayub protest was far more severe in East Pakistan and the death toll of the protesters was nearly five times that of West Pakistan, forcing Ayub to finally bid farewell to the seat of power he had occupied since ousting president Iskander Mirza in 1958 and sending him into exile in London.

So, next came Yahya, who tried to calm things down by announcing fresh elections and also an end to the hugely unpopular 'One Unit' through which provincial autonomy had been usurped totally. Yahya is credited with holding one of the few fair and undisputed elections in the country. However, this fair exercise came about as the result of an abject intelligence failure as Yahya was informed that no party would emerge with a majority and any government that was formed as a result of the elections would have to be a weak coalition, leaving Yahya's own position unassailable. In fact, he was so self-assured, he distributed a draft constitution among some politicians. This

obviously visualised a role for himself.

What followed in the 1970 election itself was a shock to the military ruler and his associates as Mujib steamrolled his opponents in East Pakistan and his Awami League captured all but a couple of National Assembly seats there, and emerged as the majority party on its own.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) won the majority in the West Wing. In the 300-seat parliament, Mujib won 160 directly contested seats and seven reserved seats for women against PPP's 81 plus five. Of course, democratic will was not honoured, with the result that the struggle for power transfer turned into a full-fledged civil war that ended with the tragedy of 1971.

YAHYA STEPS DOWN

For the military defeat in 1971, Yahya and his coterie of generals were blamed, and the military ruler was left with no option but to step down and the winner of the majority party in what was left of Pakistan took over as a civilian chief martial law administrator (CMLA) and embarked on the task of picking up the pieces, rebuilding Pakistan and its economy, lifting the shattered national morale, and writing the country's Constitution.

Bhutto also set about initiating the country's nuclear weapons programme, and rehabilitated the military's image by insisting on its training along modern scientific lines. This rehabilitation of the military's image and honour was going to cost him dearly not much later.

ZIA STRIKES

In the wake of countrywide protests after the elections in 1977, Bhutto was forced to the negotiating table by the opposition Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). One of its top negotiators, Jamaat-i-Islami's Prof Ghafoor Ahmad, was later to reveal that the two sides had reached an agreement on re-election in about two dozen of the disputed constituencies and were to sign it on the subsequent morning when Bhutto's handpicked army chief (chosen over several officers senior to him), Gen Mohammad Ziaul Haq, struck through a pre-dawn coup.

He took over the reins of the country and promised elections within 90 days, saying he was no more than a refereee blowing a foul and would step aside after fresh polls. However, when Bhutto was freed and took a train journey from Rawalpindi to Lahore, a flood of supporters converged on all stations along the route. Seeing the multitudes thronging to receive and fete their leader clearly unnerved the dictator, if at all he ever had any plans to hold elections.

Some accounts suggest that earlier when Zia went to Murree where Bhutto had been detained, to meet the deposed prime minister, the latter lashed out at the army chief and warned him that as soon as civilian rule was restored, he would face treason charges and the most dire of consequences.

Many people, particularly some officers in Zia's inner circle, debunk the theory that Zia

was spooked by Bhutto's threat and then decided to get rid of him. These close confidantes of Zia believe he never had any intention of holding elections and handing over power. Whatever little popularity Bhutto may have lost on account of rigging allegations and the PNA's street agitation, he regained the moment the military removed him from power.

But Zia consolidated his power courtesy the Supreme Court, which validated his takeover citing the Doctrine of Necessity in line with the tradition established by the Chief Court (the SC's predecessor) and chief justice Munir who had sided with an autocrat and upheld the latter's dissolution of the Constituent Assembly.

BHUTTO'S ELIMINATION

Zia clearly feared the worst regarding his own survival, and conspired with the judiciary to ensure Bhutto's judicial elimination after a trial massively seen as flawed. In fact, Supreme Court Justice Naseem Hasan Shah, one of the judges sending Bhutto to the gallows, many years later expressed remorse on live TV when he admitted the judges were under pressure and their fear for their jobs made them open to manipulation. Many years after his ruling in the Maulvi Tamizuddin case, Justice Munir, too, in his book shed what several observers termed crocodile tears.

Autocrats, of all shades and varieties, have joined hands with the judiciary more times than I can count in Pakistan's history to try and smother democracy. But somehow the uprooted plant of democracy has managed to grow, and sink new roots again and revive itself. I would say democracy's resilience is reflective of the people's deep-rooted understanding that they should be ruled by their elected representatives and time has testified over and over again that even the seemingly best dictator has done more damage to the country and its people than the worst elected leader.

For example, Ayub Khan ruled with an iron hand for a decade, but eventually the people rose up against him and his autocratic rule that saw some economic development in the country. But the masses did not benefit from his crony capitalism and the wealth of a handful of individuals grew in geometric proportions. One of the most damaging legacies of the Ayub era was the total alienation of the majority East Wing which eventually broke away.

Zia, too, ruled with an iron hand, executing Bhutto and many political activists while lashing others, but by 1983 the people had had enough of his oppression. The rebellion, mostly centred in rural Sindh during the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), left the military strongman so weakened that the following year he held a referendum (where nobody came out to vote but the general claimed a staggering turnout) and declared himself president for another five years.

He also had to announce elections, albeit partyless, the following year. His 8th Amendment bill ad-

opted by the 1985 parliament diluted parliamentary democracy to no end and gave the president the authority to dismiss governments and dissolve parliaments with a stroke of his pen. He used it to dismiss his handpicked prime minister Mohammad Khan Junejo in less than three years after making him the supposed chief executive of the country.

PPP REBORN

After he perished in a plane crash, Zia's successors moved quickly to assemble an opposition alliance led by Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, who at the time was the blue-eyed of the men in uniform, as they feared Bhutto's daughter Benazir. The game plan almost worked as it stopped the PPP from gaining a majority, but its popular support was such that all machinations failed to halt its march to being the largest single party in the National Assembly. However, a malicious campaign did deny PPP the majority in the crucial Punjab Assembly.

Within a short period of becoming the first woman prime minister in the Muslim world at age 35, Benazir survived a no-confidence motion backed by elements in the military. But just as her government was reaching the two-year mark, the president dismissed her administration on the flimsiest of grounds. The move was backed, some say instigated, by the military and upheld by the Supreme Court.

Nawaz followed her as prime minister, but three years later met the same fate. Even though the Supreme Court restored his government, the military forced him to call fresh elections and Benazir was back in power only to last three years, and handing over the reins back to Nawaz. Though he had huge majority this time round, he was sent packing by yet another army chief, General Pervez Musharraf. This goes without saying that the Supreme Court came to the usurper's rescue in terms of legitimising his illegal, unconstitutional action. His exit eight years after he took power was yet another victory for the people and democratic forces in the country.

Post-Musharraf, two elected parliaments have completed their five-year terms, but the tussle between constitutional rule and those who feel such democratic indulgences are not made for Pakistan has continued. Today, we are in the fourth year of the third parliament though doubts remain if it will complete its term.

With a doomed hybrid experiment having flopped, again a measure of democratic revival appears on the cards. Tragically, as Pakistan celebrates its 75 years of independence, the only major success of democracy is that it has refused to die and managed to survive untold challenges, including long, dark dictatorial nights.

There can be no greater tribute to democracy than recalling that politicians and political parties who have unabashedly played the military's surrogates to access crumbs of power, and collaborated in diluting the spirit of democracy, at one point or another have converted to the idea of civilian supremacy.

The writer is a former editor of Dawn.

AN UNEQUAL BALANCE OF POWER

Jinnah stressed the need for civilian supremacy and instructed the military to stay true to the constitution and the government. The tortured history of civil-military relations has taken an altogether different course, emphasises ABBAS NASIR.



Photo: AFP

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Pervez Musharraf walking through the snows in the Keil Sector in Azad Kashmir near Rawalakot in February 1999.

THE civil-military relations, known in recent times as the ‘CivMil same page’, have generally not been friendly. But the big question is: should they have been friendly at all? How about having a professional equation between the executive and its subordinate domain? To be clear about what this ‘professional’ equation actually means and entails, we have to go no farther than the beloved Quaid, who made it crystal clear beyond an iota of doubt.

This is what Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah said in his address to the officers of the Command and Staff College, Pakistan Army, Quetta, on June 14, 1948: “... (D)uring my talks with one or two very high-ranking officers I discovered that they did not know the implications of the oath taken by the troops of Pakistan. Of course, an oath is only a matter of form; what are more important are the true spirit and the heart.

“But it is an important form, and I would like to take the opportunity of refreshing your memory by reading the prescribed oath to you. I solemnly affirm, in the presence of Almighty God, that I owe allegiance to the Constitution and Dominion of Pakistan and that I will as in duty bound honestly and faithfully serve in the Dominion of Pakistan Forces and go within the terms of my enrolment wherever I may be ordered by air, land or sea and that I will observe and obey all commands of any officer set over me ...”

“As I have said just now, the spirit is what really matters. I should like you to study the Constitution, which is in force in Pakistan at present, and understand its true constitutional and legal implications when you say that you will be faithful to the Constitution of the Dominion.

“I want you to remember and if you have time enough you should study the Government of India Act, as adapted for use in Pakistan, which is our present Constitution, that the executive authority flows from the Head of the Government of Pakistan, who is the governor-general and, therefore, any command or orders that may come to you cannot come without the sanction of the Executive Head. This is the legal position.”

This is how the Father of the Nation defined the civil-military relations or the terms of their engagement, reminding everyone of the critical elements of “Constitution” and the “Government of the Dominion of Pakistan”. Three days shy of exactly three months later, he died in the humid and oppressive Karachi heat in a broken-down ambulance after being flown critically ill to PAF Mauripur (now Masroor) Base from Quetta on the outskirts of the city of lights.

Man is mortal and so was Jinnah, but the utter tragedy is that with him seem to have died his dream, his vision and his principles about what would be supreme in the country he had created out of nowhere through sheer grit, determination, an astute legal mind and integrity. A nation whose gratitude was manifest in that stalled ambulance with no backup was hardly likely to honour his principles. And it did not.

INTERFERENCE BEGINS

The ‘nation’ here is merely a figure of speech. In reality, ‘nation’ in the current context means those who monopolised positions of power and authority after Jinnah’s passing. If within 10 months of the country’s inception, something two “very high ranking” military officers said to Jinnah irked and concerned him so much that he felt compelled to spell out his vision on civil-military relations, then what followed his exit should not have shocked anybody.

When asked to trace the very first instances of the

military’s interference in the decision-making process of non-military matters, scholar and researcher Maryam S. Khan, who has written extensively and has many papers to her credit covering some of the issues being discussed here, said:

“If I were to put a start date on this, I would say that the earliest sign of military interference in politics began when Ayub Khan was inducted as defence minister into [Iskander] Mirza’s cabinet of talent. Early to mid-1950s is the period when the military enhanced its resources, assets, and generally its budgetary pie, and leveraged the Cold War military alliances. The year 1958 was basically emblematic of the political initiative also passing on to the military in addition to economic dominance.”

Such dominance may be taken as a fact of life in Pakistan but isn’t friction-free. She continued: “The constant civil-military tension exists because the military cannot govern such a huge, diverse country without the support of civilian institutions. Neither can it do away with elections altogether, because, all said and done, there is considerable episodic pushback in the form of political and social movements. More recently, the military is under extreme pressure to stabilise the economy which it simply can’t do if left to its own devices.”

NEED FOR ‘BLOODY CIVILIANS’

This brings us to the rather interesting element of the dependence of the dominant military on civilians and their institutions. That is why every now and then the contempt for the ‘bloody civilians’ is superseded by the need of the institution and its leaders to seek a partnership with them.

Ironically, this need is seen as more pronounced when there is no international crisis putting the military at the head of the table with the ‘democratic’ Western powers’ strategic interests forcing democracy to take a back seat, particularly in a poor, third world country.

For such ‘leaner’ periods, the military has innovated in setting up multibillion-rupee corporate entities, which mostly enjoy tax-free status. It also owns prime urban and agricultural land which brings so much collective wealth — in addition to a big share in the national resources via the budgetary provisions — that author Dr Ayesha Siddiqi called the phenomenon ‘Military Inc.’

But these entities still fall short of bringing in dollars like they flow when the West’s tap is open. When resources start getting tighter, civilian partnerships, even facades, are at their most useful, as a shield to deflect public wrath due to economic hardships.

COLD WAR STAGING POST

The three phases of direct military rule in Pakistan, totalling about 30 years offer an interesting insight. The first was when the Cold War was at its peak and Gen Ayub Khan visited the United States and subsequently joined two defence pacts with Washington. Who won’t remember the claim to fame of the Badaber Air Base near Peshawar from where the American U-2 spy planes used to fly over the Soviet Union for reconnaissance missions? The issue came to light when one was shot down by the Soviets.

Pakistan had cosied up to the US as a useful ally and benefited from American largesse. Some people naively or deliberately paint a rosy picture of economic growth owing to US cash injections. All it did was make a handful of rich, very, very rich and inequalities became stark. The size of the cake grew, but the biggest slices were reserved for the regime and its cronies.

Therefore, Western backing on its own did not prove sufficient to keep the military ruler in power when the people said enough was enough. Even then the military’s attitude did not change with the passing of the baton from Ayub to Gen Yahya Khan, who ended up presiding over the dismemberment of the country. Yes, Bhutto and Mujib also contributed, but there should be no forgetting that Yahya was an all-powerful military ruler.

Perhaps the only empowered civilian leader in living memory was Bhutto who was empowered mainly because a defeated, demoralised army, with several thousand servicemen, including three-star and two-star officers, prisoners of war (POWs) in India, could hardly call the shots or stake a claim to the throne.

Bhutto rehabilitated the army, brought back the POWs and won back over 5,000 square miles of lost territory in West Pakistan. The demoralised military was given such a boost that in the summer of 1977, Bhutto himself was overthrown and was executed two years later.

When Zia staged his coup, few commentators would have given him a decade in office. But in 1979 the Soviet troops marched into Afghanistan and also the pro-Washington Shah of Iran was overthrown in a clergy-led revolution for whom the US was the ‘Great Satan’. Pakistan thus became the only staging post for conducting a *jihad* against the Soviet Union, and the man who did the US bidding also rolled out his own extremist, obscurantist religious agenda under the cover of Afghan *jihad* and got comfortably ensconced in office.

Billions landed in the country as Pakistan became a key ally. It was not until the Movement for Restoration of Democracy (MRD) in 1983 that Zia received the first challenge to his rule. By 1985, Zia had a civilian prime minister installed after a partyless election. But he could not even get along with his own handpicked, yet assertive and clean, chief executive so he sacked him and called for new elections. Before the elections could be held, he died in an air crash.

BENAZIR’S CONCESSIONS

Zia may have died but he cast a long shadow over the elected government, led by his archenemy Benazir Bhutto, that followed. Zia’s trusted Senate chairman and career civil servant Ghulam Ishaq Khan succeeded him as president. In her initial months in office, Benazir secured some concessions from the military, such as the exit of the head of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) who had formed the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad (IJI) alliance to deny her a huge majority in the election. She also insisted that a retired officer, Lt-Gen Shamsur Rehman Kallue, be appointed the director-general of ISI. The military relented.

But when Kallue scaled back the domestic political role of the agency, army chief Gen Mirza Aslam Beg tasked his DG Military Intelligence, then Maj-Gen (later the three-star DG of ISI) Asad Durrani, with expanding the MI’s domestic political footprint.

Gen Durrani started to brief handpicked journalists with stories to discredit the Benazir government. And many such stories appeared in the media. To this day, it is not clear what happened to the report of former air chief Zulfikar Ali Khan who had been commissioned by the prime minister to prepare reform recommendations for the ISI to make the agency more accountable and focussed on its main task. It is still gathering dust somewhere.

Less than two years after taking office, and surviving a military-backed no-confidence move, the president dismissed her government and dissolved the assemblies as the military did not forgive Benazir for ‘inter-

fering’ in decisions about the appointment of the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff committee.

Over the following nine years, Nawaz Sharif twice was prime minister and Benazir once again, but were not allowed full terms. Thanks to the 8th Amendment, the country was ruled by a troika, comprising the president, the army chief and the prime minister. This was a first in parliamentary democracy. Some described the said amendment as a pressure release valve that removed the trigger for martial law. But when the military could sack an elected parliament and send home an elected prime minister/government and have its say, why would it need to impose martial law? It was the de facto ruler in any case.

In 1997, Nawaz, having absolute majority in the National Assembly, did away with the 8th Amendment, but just a couple of years later, in 1999, he was deposed, sentenced on spurious charges and exiled when he challenged the military and questioned its right to call the shots. At that point, the military ruler, Gen Pervez Musharraf, was no more than an international pariah. What saved his skin was the 9/11 incident in 2001, which was followed by the ‘war on terror’ and suddenly Pakistan’s military ruler became the most feted man in the West.

This enabled him to rig the election and usher in a civilian façade to his rule. Yes, this too happened with the collusion of the judiciary and the dreaded 8th Amendment provisions vesting the president with sweeping powers in a parliamentary democracy, were revived.

Rampant terrorism in Pakistan was his lasting legacy and it was left again to the politicians to provide the moral sanction for the military to push back the terrorists and curb the mayhem. As she campaigned for the scheduled elections, Benazir was killed in a terror attack after Gen Musharraf had denied her the security warranted by the threat to her life.

LACK OF TRUST

Even when they came back to power in two relatively fair elections in 2008 and 2013, both the PPP and PML-N leaderships were never trusted and seen as suspect. When the politicians did away with arbitrary presidential powers, restored parliamentary supremacy, and allowed provincial autonomy, the military was unhappy as it lost one significant lever of wielding power.

To add insult to injury, when the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award was finalised and in recognition of provincial autonomy transferred substantial funds and devolved powers, the centre’s dwindling resources were viewed with alarm and triggered simmering anger in one of the major claimants of the federal pie because it had shrunk.

Things reached a head when a message meant for the international community — to the effect that Pakistan was addressing the global concerns seriously with regard to terror-financing — was seen as an insult by the military. Retribution followed. And from 2016, Pakistan, which was on a decent trajectory, has limped from one crisis to another. Even in the 75th year of independence, efforts are underway to find the elusive stability amid a collapsing economy and the consequent inflation.

All this is not to say that political parties and politicians have not been found wanting. They need to polish their act for sure. Way too often they fall short in delivering efficient governance. However, it is safe to say that till Pakistan is solely defined by its security concerns, the balance of power will remain firmly with the military in its relations with the civilians.

The writer is a former editor of Dawn.

SECURITY STATE AND ITS DILEMMAS

The Pakistan Army has historically exercised a disproportionate influence on the country’s internal politics as well as foreign policy. While it has withdrawn from directly wielding political power, BRIAN CLOUGHLEY believes it continues to desire a say in important matters.



Missiles mounted on a carrier sail by a giant portrait of Allama Iqbal in the March 23 parade in the federal capital of Islamabad. (Courtesy: White Star Photo)

SINCE Pakistan’s independence, the disagreement with India over the territory of Kashmir has adversely affected relations between the two countries, leading to military conflicts more than once.

Pakistan’s army was formed on the day of the country’s independence, with a strength of some 140,000 as against India’s 260,000. Given the locations of major military installations, such as logistics depots and training establishments, which were based on colonial requirements, the Indian army benefitted much more from the split than Pakistan’s, which took several years to attain balance.

Ever since Maharajah Hari Singh signed an instrument of accession on October 26, 1947, to accede his overwhelmingly Muslim state to India, the military posture of both countries has, to varying degrees, depended on national policies regarding the dangerous deadlock.

One recent development spurring distrust and animosity was the 2019 repeal of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which, as the BBC noted, had, “allowed the state a certain amount of autonomy — its own constitution, a separate flag and freedom to make laws ... As a result, Jammu and Kashmir could make their own rules relating to permanent residency, ownership of property and fundamental rights.”

It is no surprise that the first test of the Pakistan army involved low-scale limited combat with Indian troops in Kashmir. That first conflict, in 1947-48, ended with a ceasefire, as it became evident that victory by either side was not possible.

The United Nations followed its Charter in furthering the “peaceful settlement of disputes” through Security Council Resolution 47 of March 1948, recommending withdrawal of Pakistani tribesmen from Kashmir, reduction of Indian forces to the minimum consistent with internal security, and, most significantly, holding that, “The Government of India should undertake that there will be established in Jammu and Kashmir a Plebiscite Administration to hold a plebiscite as soon as possible on the question of the accession of the State to India or Pakistan”.

The Pakistan army then concentrated on achieving balance, but experienced great difficulties until Gen Ayub Khan took over as commander on January 17, 1951. He was an effective chief, and the next few years saw substantial growth in strength and improvement in all aspects of military organisation — especially in terms of command and control. However, these advances were not matched by the national government, which experienced grave difficulties following the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan, the prime minister, on October 16, 1951.

Although Pakistan did not contribute militarily to American efforts in the Korean war of 1950-53, its generally pro-United States policy and supportive stance in condemning North Korea encouraged Washington to propose a mutual defence assistance agreement, which took force in May 1954. The army benefitted greatly, but one consequence of closer association with the US and membership of the Central Treaty Organisation (Cento) and South-East Asia Treaty Organisation (Seato) was Soviet negation of any moves in the Security Council

towards a Kashmir solution that would have been contrary to Indian objectives.

THE MILITARY IN POLITICS

In 1956, following the belated adoption of the first Constitution, governor-general Iskander Ali Mirza was selected by the Electoral College to be the president. In 1958, he dismissed the government of prime minister Feroze Khan Noon, who, although regrettably incompetent, had been elected by parliament, and declared martial law on October 7.

The spiral of military influence in the governance of the country had begun, encouraged by Washington, which took advantage of good relations to mount aerial spying missions over the Soviet Union from an air base near Peshawar.

Ayub Khan tried his best. His 1960 agreement with Nehru concerning the allocation of Indus waters was commendable, but the overall tenor of his leadership

ceasefire should take effect on September 22, 1965”.

In spite of an intensive public relations campaign in Pakistan aimed at persuading citizens that the war was successful — which included the designation of Sept 6 as the National Defence Day, which continues to be marked by military ceremonies — it is apparent that Pakistan suffered a major economic setback and diminution of its international standing.

The US terminated aid at the outbreak of conflict, but military spending continued to be much higher than prudent, rising from 46.07pc of the total budget in 1964-65 to 55.62pc in 1968-69. The army found it difficult to recover from the war, and much equipment came from China, which supplied many weapons, including Type-59 tanks.

Meanwhile, domestic discontent was eagerly fanned by political parties, and after Ayub’s foreign minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was dismissed for criticising him in public, the latter went on to form the Pakistan People’s Party in 1967.



Army Chief General Ayub Khan, along with General Musa, General Yahya and Air Force Chief Air Marshal Nur Khan (not visible behind Ayub Khan), witness military exercises leading to the 1965 war. (Courtesy: Ayub Khan Archives/ Tahir Ayub)

There was immense discontent in the East, and a resistance movement headed by the Mukti Bahini began a campaign aimed at establishing equality and Bengali self-respect. In March 1971, the army began Operation Searchlight, aimed at suppressing unrest, and subsequent actions by the West Pakistan military — to this day either denied or ignored by Pakistan — were criminally brutal. There is compelling evidence that there was genocide, and one of the few redeeming features of the period was the honourable resignation of Gen Yaqub Khan, who refused to use military force against Awami League protesters.

The internal conflict led to war with India, which had supported Bengali independence movements and had itself prepared for war at an early stage of the crisis. It was formally begun, however, by Pakistan, which, on December 3, 1971, launched Operation Chengiz Khan — an ill-conceived and counter-productive series of airstrikes on airfields in north-western India. No country could disregard such attacks, and general war broke out in the east and spread to the west.

The Pakistan army was resoundingly defeated, and the Hamoodur Rahman Commission analysed the debacle in detail. Its 1974 report was suppressed and remains highly classified, but some of its contents were revealed in an unclassified version released by the government and were later published (Vanguard Press; 2001).

According to the report, “it is a sad commentary on the efficiency of our army leadership, which appears to have landed us in a major war with a powerful neighbour without any psychological preparation or coordinated planning. This was a war in which everything went wrong for the Pakistan armed forces. They were not only outnumbered but also out-weaponed and out-generalled. Our planning was unrealistic, strategy unsuitable, decisions untimely, and execution faulty. The ignominy of surrender lay in the lack of leadership from the higher command.”

THE BHUTTO-ZIA ERA

Bhutto took over from Yahya as president and chief martial law administrator on December 20, 1971, and soon put the army in its place by appointing Lt-Gen Gul Hasan as the chief of army staff. Of even more importance, he moved Pakistan to the nuclear league by authorising the development of a nuclear weapons programme. He became prime minister on August 14, 1973, and continued to hold the portfolio of defence minister, with a minister of state performing routine tasks.

Bhutto largely succeeded in divorcing the army from enforcing civil law, or the version of it applicable at the time. Military re-equipment and training programmes went ahead, although not without interruption. Floods and earthquakes in 1973-5 required support to the stricken populations of Punjab, Sindh, and the since renamed NWFP, and the worst calamity was an earthquake in Swat and Hazara in December 1974, which left over 5,000 dead. The army provided aid and undertook projects of reconstructing roads, dams and other major infrastructure. Gradually, the army regained the trust of the people.

It can be argued that Bhutto had the best interests of his country at heart when he introduced his many

Photo: Iamveer Shahzad

WHAT WENT WRONG IN 1971?

SHUJA NAWAZ traces the events and the missteps that led to the breakup of United Pakistan. Could the loss of Pakistan’s eastern wing have been foretold?



Lt-Gen Niazi with Lt-Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora of the Indian Army arriving together at the Ramna Race Course in Dhaka on December 16, 1971. (Courtesy: Raghu Rai)

THE state of Pakistan had a rough birth in 1947. Displacement, religious violence, and a massive exchange of populations between India and Pakistan with the partition of British India left indelible wounds on the psyches of the two countries. Pakistan’s survival and unity was made even harder by geography, economic disparities, and cultural differences between its two wings that came together under a single banner, as a last-minute arrangement of a united Pakistan because of the Muslim Bengali elite in Dhaka at that time who had played a key role in the freedom movement, and the British decision to partition Bengal.

It did not take too long before internal tensions between the two wings laid the ground for the demise of the young state in 1971. The fraternal twins named Pakistan were separated by nearly a thousand miles of hostile India. Each wing had its own languages, with the western wing bound together by Urdu as the language of the freedom movement in northern and north-western India, and Bangla in the east.

THE LANGUAGE ISSUE

The issue of national languages was controversial, as Bengalis pressed for recognition of their lingua franca, while in the West, Urdu speakers, including Urdu-speaking elites from what became East Pakistan, like the patrician family of Khawaja Nazimuddin, opted for Urdu. Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah tried to settle the issue in a couple of speeches during a week-long visit to East Pakistan in March 1948.

In a speech at the Race Course Ground on March 21, 1948, Jinnah said: “The state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language.” He repeated this message in his convocation address at the Curzon Hall of the University of Dhaka, on March 24, 1948, even as members of the audience protested, and then reiterated it in a radio speech.

Ironic that these words emanated from a leader who was not fluent in Urdu himself.

The seeds of dissent and disruption were sown in those early days, leading to violent rioting in East Pakistan in 1952 with severe government action, under the new Bengali, but Urdu-speaking, prime minister Nazimuddin. Protesters were killed in police firing, fuelling further unrest. The language movement gave birth, among other things, to the Awami Muslim League, later becoming the Awami League in 1955, and the erection of the Shaheed Minar, or Martyrs’ Column. February 21 was marked as *Shohid Dibosh*, or Martyrs’ Day, later to become a national holiday in Bangladesh.

West Pakistani elites feared the majority of East Pakistan within the union. They came up with the formula of One Unit for West Pakistan in 1955 that would place it at parity with the East. This was a signal to the Bengalis of the mistrust of their brethren in the West Wing. They never fully accepted this political subterfuge.

All these were the portents of the failure of united Pakistan, as a tone-deaf and West-based civil and military elite downplayed the cultural identity and economic needs of their majority province in the East Wing. Despite efforts later to placate the Bengalis by making Bangla and Urdu as joint national languages

in 1956, the unrest continued to simmer, fed by the economic and power disparities between the two wings.

MUJIB’S SIX POINTS

Matters came to a head after the end of the 1965 Pakistan-India war that had been fought mainly in the West and that had heightened the feeling of East Pakistanis that they were not seen as important by the rulers in the West. At the meeting in Lahore of the opposition parties to the government of military ruler Field Marshal Ayub Khan in February 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of the Awami League presented his Six Points in the form of a charter to give his wing more control over its affairs, especially its economy.

Most Pakistanis today may not be familiar with these Six Points that became the basis for the breakup of Pakistan and the motive force behind the Bengali freedom movement. Here they are:

* The Constitution should provide for a Federation of Pakistan in its true sense [based] on the Lahore Resolution, and the parliamentary form of government with supremacy of a Legislature directly elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.

* The federal government should deal with only two subjects, Defence and Foreign Affairs, and all other residuary subjects shall be vested in the federating states.

* Two separate but freely convertible currencies for two wings should be introduced; or, if this is not feasible, there should be one currency for the whole country, but effective constitutional provisions should be introduced to stop the flight of capital from East to West Pakistan. Furthermore, a separate Banking Reserve should be established, and separate fiscal and monetary policy be adopted for East Pakistan.

* The power of taxation and revenue collection shall be vested in the federating units and the federal centre will have no such power on the issue. The federation will be entitled to a share in the state taxes to meet its expenditures.

* There should be two separate accounts for the foreign exchange earnings of the two wings; the foreign exchange requirements of the federal government should be met by the two wings equally or in a ratio to be fixed; indigenous products should move free of duty between the two wings, and the Constitution should empower the units to establish trade links with foreign countries.

* East Pakistan should have a separate militia or paramilitary force.

These Six Points actually emerged from the 11 that had initially comprised the 21 points of the 1954 provincial election in the run-up to which Mujib had sought virtual provincial autonomy for East Pakistan. Rehman Sobhan and Nurul Islam were among the authors of these points. To a Pakistani born after 1971, it will be interesting to note how similar some of these points are to the 18th Amendment of modern Pakistan.

The West Pakistani opposition parties rejected the Mujib proposal and portrayed him as a separatist. He left the conference and immediately came into the cross-hairs of the government.

Soon he was ensnared in the so-called Agartala Conspiracy of 1966 in which some 35 East Pakistani civil servants and military officers were accused of having crossed over to the Indian town of Agartala in the north-eastern state of Tripura and connived with Indian agents to overthrow the government in East Pakistan.

Mujib was named the prime suspect much later, in

1968, and arrested. It was even alleged that he continued to direct the seditious conspiracy from his jail cell. An open trial under a tribunal headed by Justice S.A. Rehman was convened and the government publicised the Six Points, hoping thus to garner public support for its efforts to control ‘anti-state elements’. That ham-handed policy backfired as more people in East Pakistan became aware of the demands for equitable treatment of their province. Mujib became a hero.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

In the corridors of the Planning Commission, Bengali economists, led by Nurul Islam (then director of the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics [PIDE]) and West Pakistani economists debated ways of making the economic system equitable, as they prepared the Fourth Five-Year Plan and a perspective plan for the economy till 1985.

The Third Plan had already tried to give East Pakistan more resources than West Pakistan, but this was not enough to assuage the East Pakistani economists who were, in turn, briefing Bengali politicians. West Pakistan, they argued, had greater resources spent on it under headings that were not part of the total allocation of resources to be divided between the two wings. For instance, the massive Indus Basin Project was outside the plan, as was the expenditure on the new capital in Islamabad.

Khalid Ikram, an economist, who then was at the Planning Commission, defines the basis of the inequity: “With the country’s capital located in West Pakistan and a ‘license raj’ dominating economic policymaking, geographical propinquity gave West Pakistani businessmen much greater access to policymakers and greater ease in acquiring industrial and import licenses. It is not surprising that the private sector was much more vibrant in West Pakistan than in East. The ascendancy of West Pakistanis in the military and the civil service also provided a disproportionate clout to that region.”

Moreover, Ikram noted, the actual investment allocation favoured West Pakistan, and “since about 80pc of the armed forces were stationed in West Pakistan, the multiplier generated by expenditure on salaries, construction of cantonments, military roads, airfields and naval installations etc., was conveniently overlooked”.

Another leading economist of the time at the Planning Commission, Sartaj Aziz, noted in his diary at the time that “East Pakistan economists are convinced that they would be better off economically if they were separate. They have no large defence burden to carry, they would be responsible for only 10-15pc of the total debt, and they would get food under PL-480 from the USA to balance the inter-wing trade. They would still be left with Rs100 crores of foreign exchange for development, unlike West Pakistan which will give up all its foreign exchange in debt, defence, barter and bonus voucher scheme.” (*Between Dreams and Realities: Some Milestones in Pakistan’s History* by Sartaj Aziz; 2009. Pp. 22-23)

Aziz noted that the Planning Commission pushed for a substantial transfer of resources to East Pakistan in the Fourth Plan. But much larger affirmative action to make up for past inequity was demanded by the Bengali economists.

Aziz recalls that Nurul Islam calculated for the discussion on the Fourth Plan that West Pakistan owed East Pakistan some Rs1,500 crores for the transfer of

resources to West Pakistan from the East. When discussions began with Bengali leaders, Mujib stated that this transfer was actually equal to Rs3,800 crores. The real number, Aziz contends, was closer to Rs320 crores. Negotiations continued in East Pakistan with a team led by M.M. Ahmed and including Sartaj Aziz and Moin Baqai. But political turmoil overtook everything.

Meanwhile, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) had launched a protest movement against his erstwhile patron, Ayub Khan, even as the latter was celebrating his ‘Decade of Development’. Protests spread to both wings. In the East, Mujib became the focal point of the opposition to the military ruler. When one of the accused in the Agartala case died in police custody, a firestorm erupted in East Pakistan. The beleaguered Ayub government finally withdrew the conspiracy case in 1968. But the damage had been done. The emperor had been seen to have feet of clay. This emboldened both Bhutto and Mujib to up the ante.

AYUB’S EXIT, YAHYA’S MISTAKES

Street protests against an ailing and weakened Ayub Khan grew day by day. Rioting crowds in both wings engulfed the seats of power, protesting unequal development and political repression. Ayub stepped down on March 26, 1969, and handed over power in an unconstitutional manner not to the proper successor, the Bengali speaker of the National Assembly, but to his army chief Gen Yahya Khan.

Yahya Khan promised free and fair elections in 1970. He also abolished One Unit as a sop to the Bengalis. But that did not help. He appeared ill-equipped to run a complex and politically awakened country and was partly distracted by a new assignment that he had taken on: to build a bridge between China and the United States and prepare the ground for Nixon’s national security advisor, Henry Kissinger, to visit the Chinese capital.

Yahya was also reportedly prone to inebriation to the extent that he was sometimes incapable of making sound decisions or fulfil his duties. His intelligence agencies were reported to have predicted a hung parliament. This, they believed, would allow Yahya to remain president, with a weak and compliant prime minister.

Feverish campaigning began in both wings of Pakistan for the elections, slated originally for October 1970, but postponed due to heavy flooding in East Pakistan. They were rescheduled for December 7, 1970. However, nature had other plans. Cyclone Bhola began forming from the remnants of Tropical Storm Nora that had developed in the South China Sea and then meandered westward. It headed up the Bay of Bengal and struck East Pakistan in the evening of November 12. Despite warnings of the impending storm, East Pakistan was ill prepared for the effects of the devastating cyclone. This sad and harrowing story is told in *The Vortex: A True Story of History’s Deadliest Storm, and Unspeakable War, and Liberation* by Scott Carney and Jason Miklian (Harper Collins, New York, 2022).

After a 1960 cyclone, Gordon Dunn of the US National Hurricane Centre had come and made recommendations for East Pakistan to be protected against the next big one. Few of his suggestions were implemented. Some 300-500,000 deaths may have been caused by the

WHAT WENT WRONG IN 1971?



Refugees stream out of East Pakistan on the way to the Indian state of West Bengal as tensions heighten as a result of the Pakistan Army's clampdown in March 1971. (Courtesy: Raghu Rai)

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latest storm. Yahya's government was slow to respond. Even the president himself only came after a trip to China on Nov 14, arriving in an apparently inebriated state as he stumbled through his remarks to the press at the airport and then took a hurried aerial tour of the affected areas. When pressure mounted locally against the slow response of the government, he came back again on Nov 23 and four days later acknowledged at a press conference "slips and mistakes" made by his administration while promising greater provincial autonomy to provide responsive governance.

Sheikh Mujib and Maulana Abdul Hamid Bhashani, a left-leaning Deobandi scholar and founder of the Awami League who later formed his own progressive National Awami Party (NAP), both began openly criticising the efforts of the martial law government after visiting the flood-ravaged areas. Mujib spoke of regional autonomy as the key to a stable political system. Yahya was asked to postpone the elections. He refused. It was against this background that country had its first true and generally free and fair general elections since independence. They were also the first national polls held under the glare of broadcast media coverage and instant and unfiltered reporting of results. (I was among the team that reported the results in a marathon broadcast of some 29 hours from PTV's Rawalpindi-Islamabad studios.) This created great confidence among the population regarding the results of the elections.

Mujib put forward only a few candidates in the West Wing in an effort to claim national support in a united Pakistan. In the East he had candidates for 160 of 162 seats, leaving one seat for Nurul Amin, the venerable Bengali leader, and one for Raja Tridev Roy of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Bhutto had no PPP candidate in East Pakistan.

The Awami League swept the polls in the East. Bhutto's PPP got 81 out of the 132 seats in the West, primarily in Sindh and Punjab. Yahya was ready to concede to Mujib the honorific of prime minister in waiting. He met Bhutto who said no future constitution could be written without his party's assent. Yahya also went to Dhaka and met Mujib, saying to the press on his way out that Mujib would be the next prime minister, but he himself would not be there. He then met Bhutto and persuaded him to return to Dhaka to meet Mujib.

UNREST BEGINS

Behind the scenes, the army in East Pakistan had prepared plans for civil unrest. The original author of this plan, Lt-Gen Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, eventually had a change of heart and demurred on military action. He was removed and demoted to his substantive rank of major-general. Mujib's party swore allegiance to an independent Bangladesh. A new military commander, Lt-Gen Tikka Khan, was sent to head the Eastern Command and act as governor of East Pakistan after Sahibzada's dismissal. He was prepared for the use of force to assert control over the province. His heavy-handed tactics provoked further unrest.

Meanwhile, Yahya's team, including M.M. Ahmed and his own principal staff officer, Lt-Gen S.G.M. Pirzada, continued negotiation with the Awami League team that included Rehman Sobhan, Kamal Hossain and Nurul Islam. Among others, Sobhan noted, there was no constitutional draft prepared by the military high command. Later in the negotiations with Bhutto's team, the same situation persisted. Interestingly, Bhutto's team included Sobhan's childhood classmate at St. Paul's in Darjeeling, Rafi Raza, and Abdul Hafeez Pirzada.

Sobhan had made a trip to Lahore and then Karachi in early January at the behest of Tajuddin and met Mubashir Hassan Khan, Mumtaz Daultana and Mahmud Ali Kasuri. Sobhan said he was surprised that they too had not done any homework on the constitutional issues. Bhutto declined to meet Sobhan. Later, when Bhutto came to Dhaka he only dealt in rhetoric and talked about power-sharing. Nothing specific on the constitutional issues. Sobhan invited Rafi Raza, Kamal Azfar and Mubashir Hassan to his home for discussion, but they still had no defined proposals. The final economic discussions in the last days of March in Dhaka with Yahya's team led by M.M. Ahmed were fruitless. Kamal Hossain was waiting for a call from Ahmed, but Pirzada instructed Ahmed to depart for West Pakistan.

OPERATION SEARCHLIGHT

Meanwhile, Tikka had been recalled and made a corps commander in the West, and Lt-Gen A.A.K. Niazi was sent to implement Operation Searchlight to assert military control over the province in March 1971. As Bhutto and others departed for Karachi, the army went

into action during the night of March 25. Mujib was captured in his home by commandos and was airlifted to West Pakistan. The army went on a rampage against rebellious soldiers of the East Bengal Regiment and other locals, especially Bengali university students dubbed 'miscreants' by the military public relations machine (an archaic English term derived from the Latin for those who strayed from the religious path. The term continues to be in the lexicon of the military even today.)

They were spurred in part by the reports of large-scale killing of Bengali and Bihari sympathisers of the Pakistani military by Bengali rebels and the Mukti Bahini. No accurate figures have been compiled in Bangladesh of these internecine killings. But they could well be in the tens of thousands.

The army's actions were later termed an attempt at genocide, among others by the US consul-general in Dhaka, Archer Blood, who wrote to his bosses in Washington DC: "Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities ... Our government has evidenced what many will consider moral bankruptcy." The number of people killed has been much debated, but horrific nevertheless. A figure used by *Pravda* of three million is much cited though not fully supported by evidence.

Similarly, systematically planned rapes of Bengali women by the military are discussed extensively and have not been rebutted effectively by Pakistani authorities. "When Australian doctor Geoffrey Davis was brought to Dhaka by the United Nations to assist with late-term abortions of raped women, at the end of the war, he believed the estimated figure for the number of Bengali women who were raped

— 200,000 to 400,000 — was probably too low," according to a report in the *Smithsonian*.

A childhood schoolmate of mine, who was a young army officer in East Pakistan at the time, told me of the horrors he witnessed. It still haunts him, he said. His was not an isolated reaction.

Meanwhile, West Pakistanis were kept in the dark by the officially controlled media and their elites largely remained silent as the tragedy unfolded in East Pakistan.

Some 1.5 million Bengalis fled to India, which gave India its opportunity of the century to cut Pakistan to size. As 1971 progressed, prime minister Indira Gandhi prepared and strengthened her forces under Gen Sam Manekshaw to encircle East Pakistan. It took her some time to get her forces into position. When Sobhan escaped to Agartala and made his way to Delhi, he discovered that Indian officialdom in Tripura and Delhi was unaware of the full extent of the carnage in East Pakistan. Mujib's main lieutenant, Tajuddin, had also made his way to Delhi, but the Indians apparently did not know him or about him, according to Sobhan, who was taken to meet him apparently to help identify him to the Indian authorities. Sobhan then proceeded to Europe, England, and then the United States to garner support for the Bengali cause.

INDIAN INTERVENTION

Indira's forces joined the ranks of Mukti Bahini, and trained them to keep the Pakistani forces occupied. Pakistan did not have an effective defence in East Pakistan. Its forces were ill-equipped and outnumbered. It had virtually no naval or air force.



Pakistani soldiers and former prisoners in India line up as they return to Pakistan on October 1, 1973 after the Pakistani-India War of 1971.

The strategy that Niazi came up with was to protect the routes of ingress from India. His isolated forces fought as hard as they could along the border against a superior number of Indian and Mukti Bahini forces without air cover or support. There was no plan to defend Dhaka. Interestingly, India did not have a strategic plan for the capture of Dhaka either, except in the minds of a couple of local commanders.

DHAKA FALLS

The war continued inside East Pakistan through most of 1971. Then Yahya, in a desperate attempt to provoke international intervention in the conflict between Pakistan and India, launched an air attack on the evening of Dec 3, the night of the full moon, from the West on selected Indian airfields. Too little, too late. Full-scale war broke out. It was a desperate gamble of a man who held few cards in his hands. A huge bluff that did not pay off.

To preserve his pride, Yahya sacrificed his manpower and his country. In the end, his foreign friends did not come to his aid, as he had hoped. Neither America nor China stepped in to stop the Indian invasion of East Pakistan or prevent the fall of Dhaka when Indian paratroopers dropped near Tangail and made their way to an undefended capital.

Niazi surrendered at Ramna Race Course ground on Dec 16, 1971, to his Indian counterpart Lt-Gen Jagjit Singh Arora. His bluster fading into his signature crass jokes, he met his Indian captors over lunch prior to the surrender ceremony and won a small victory by handing over a JCO's damaged revolver as if it was his personal weapon.

A comical scene was played out on Dec 17 evening at the PTV studios in Chaklala, where I was ready to introduce a speech by Yahya from the President's House on a new constitution for Pakistan that might resolve the crisis with the Eastern wing. At the last minute, I was instructed to present in the first person the president's address to the nation, since he was apparently incapacitated. I then proceeded to read Yahya's speech, mightily resisting the urge to mimic his staccato delivery and clipped pseudo-British accent!

Mujib sat out the war, isolated in a jail on Jarranwala Road outside Faisalabad in Punjab at a military trial chaired by then Brigadier Rahimuddin Khan. He was released by Bhutto on January 8, 1972, and was flown to London en route to Dhaka.

Thus was Pakistan broken apart. Jinnah's Pakistan died a premature death in December 1971, as Bangladesh emerged as an independent state. Gen Yahya was quickly ousted by an internal army putsch orchestrated, among others, by Brig F.B. Ali. Bhutto was summoned back from New York, where he was playing a dramatic role at the United Nations as Pakistan's passionate spokesperson on the global stage, pleading for his nation to be saved against Indian aggression. Ironically, Brig Ali and other army officers were later convicted of trying to overthrow Bhutto in 1973.

Bhutto was sworn in as the new but unelected president and the first civilian chief martial law administrator of Pakistan on the night of Dec 20. A thousand miles to the East, 90,000 plus civilians and military personnel became Indian prisoners of war. They returned eventually after Bhutto negotiated a peace with India at Simla in July 1972.

The army had conducted its own high-level and rapid post-mortem of the lost war against India. It pointed out many flaws of strategy and tactics. But the new military high command buried that report in its archives, hoping perhaps to deprive Bhutto of ammunition to use against the military. (*Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army, and the Wars within* by Shuja Nawaz; 2008 and 2017; Pp.310-311.)

The army took back the reins of power in a coup by Bhutto's chosen army chief Gen Ziaul Haq in July 1977. Pakistan was changed forever. As for the East wing, Khalid Ikram's poignant epitaph sums it all up for what it was: "Very painfully, I must say that the best thing that happened to East Pakistan was that it became Bangladesh."

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A MISREPRESENTED TRAGEDY

Five decades on, JAVED JABBAR highlights reasons why the loss of East Pakistan in 1971 is still a subject of considerable debate.

A COMMON year has 365 days: numbered, named, divided into weeks and months. An aeon is not precisely measurable: one estimate is half-a-billion years — or more. For Pakistan, so young at 24 years of age, 1971 featured specific words, actions, consequences that became traumatic, tragic. Yet that year was also like an aeon. Amorphous, vast, explicit, yet also ambiguous.

Following upon a thousand years of Muslim history in South Asia, uncountable memories and aspirations of millions of human beings, sharing so much yet so little, marked by misperceptions, miscalculations; with clarity but also scepticism about precise responsibility, culminating in catastrophe — the glory of the world's most uniquely-created nation-state encountering a black hole that sucked in both the innocent and the invidious.

Hope met fear. One Wing's vote became the other Wing's veto. Confidence was replaced by suspicion. Talks led to silence. A neighbour conspired, masqueraded, invaded, desecrated. A decision became a disaster. Humans became beasts. Sisters and brothers became aliens and enemies: only some retained mutual respect. Dignity met disgrace. A fairy tale became a nightmare.

This brief reflection retrieves a few truths often lost in the aeon's haze.

BALLOTS TO BULLETS

Just a year before the birth of Bangladesh, a majority of East Pakistani voters did not vote for the confederalist Six Points of the Awami League (AL), which did secure a thumping majority of 160 out of 162 seats from East Pakistan in the National Assembly of 300 seats. This anomaly was due to the unrepresentative first-past-the-post electoral system unwisely adopted by Pakistan, India and other former British colonies simply because it is the Westminster system.

Voter turnout in the 1970 elections — widely accepted as free and fair — reveals: Punjab 68.7pc; Sindh 60.1pc; East Pakistan 56.9pc; NWFP 48.4pc; and Balochistan 40.6pc. Of the about 57pc who did vote in East Pakistan, only about 47pc voted for the AL. The remaining about 10pc voted against the AL. So we had the weird situation wherein a party with less than a majority of East Pakistani voters, 47pc, nevertheless launched a civil disobedience movement, colluded with India, and, after the March 25, 1971, military action — a grievously flawed attempt instead of finding a political solution — led the secessionist campaign to break up the original Pakistan. There were two reasons for the low turnout: boycott by the popular, left-leaning Maulana Abdul Hamid Bhashani groupings, and the dislocation of millions after the cyclone of November 1970.

QUAID'S VISION

Where Quaid-i-Azam made the critical misjudgement in March 1948 by declining to give Bengali equal status with Urdu as a state language — because Bengali, unlike Urdu, was spoken only in Bengal — it is to the Quaid's great credit that he had the vision and the insight to recognise the historical aspirations of Bengali Muslim nationalism.

He was the only one of the three key protagonists in May 1947 (the other two being Congress and the British) who was prepared to accept an indepen-



Justice Hamoodur Rehman, who headed the 1971 War Enquiry Commission, presenting supplementary report of the Commission to Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Rawalpindi on November 25, 1974. (Courtesy: of SZABIST Archives, Karachi)

dent, sovereign state of Bengal, as proposed by H.S. Suhrawardy.

INJUSTICES REDRESSED, YET ...

Though the onus for parting is placed on West Pakistan's actions from the start, was it reasonable to ex-

pect that wrongs inflicted on East Bengal by the British over the previous 200 years — making East Bengal the most undeveloped part of the region — could be righted at magic speed in less than 24 years? To overcome the formidable disadvantages with which both Wings began their respective lives, plus difficulties of a 1,000-mile distance, India's congenital hostility,

and West Pakistan's own needs, to which was added the Kashmir problem? As it turns out, a great deal was done in 24 years to redress historical British injustices; improvements that are rarely acknowledged.

But disparities persisted. The East's low absorption capacity was only one reason. Subliminal discrimination, insensitivity and incompetence were conjoined to allow the major share of foreign aid and foreign exchange inflows to go to West Pakistan. From 1958 to 1971, for 13 crucial years, the heads of state and government remained West Pakistani military men with most senior Bengali officers denied top appointments in their own province.

There was also arrogance in sections of the political, administrative and military leaderships. Along with other reasons, this attitude fuelled alienation. There were many exceptions, often ignored. Perhaps most laudable was Lt-Gen Azam Khan. As governor, he exemplified how a military leader from West Pakistan could sincerely engage with the Bengali people of East Pakistan with humility and exceptional efficiency. His forced return to West Pakistan was deeply lamented.

DHAKA CHEERS FOR PAKISTAN

It bears noting that just two-and-a-half years after the emergence of Bangladesh — despite all the extensive hate propaganda against Pakistan and its army for wildly exaggerated/yet believed cruel actions in 1971, and the PPP leader's own role in the breakdown of talks in March 1971 — when prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto arrived in Dhaka in July 1974, huge crowds welcomed him with slogans that included 'Pakistan Zindabad'. This emotional outpouring on the streets so dismayed the then Indian high commissioner in Bangladesh that he later wrote: "I have never been so distressed as I was that day".

THE FORGOTTEN GENOCIDE

Where utterly absurd, fabricated numbers of victims are blamed on Pakistan, there is the forgotten actual genocide. Neither global media and academia, nor, sadly, even sections of Pakistan's intelligentsia have fully acknowledged this calamity. Qutubuddin Aziz, an eminent senior journalist, who later served as information minister in Pakistan's high commission in London, painstakingly researched and documented this bloodbath in his book *Blood and Tears* (UPP; 1974) that carries 170 eyewitness accounts of the atrocities committed on West Pakistanis, Biharis and non-Bengalis and pro-Pakistan Bengalis in 55 towns of East Pakistan by Awami League militants and other rebels in March-April 1971.

In the Introduction, the author cites names and inconsistencies of several Western and a Pakistani journalist who deliberately omitted reporting these atrocities between March 1 and 26, 1971, when, ill-advisedly, the government expelled all foreign journalists from East Pakistan. This enabled disregard or neglect of inconvenient truths because it was so much more 'credible' to focus on the excesses of a 'brutal' West Pakistani army allegedly slaughtering millions of Bengalis.

The grotesque allegation of three million Bengalis killed was first demolished by the courageous American journalist William Drummond, the New Delhi bureau chief of *Los Angeles Times*, who visited both East Pakistan and Bangladesh between 1970 and 1972 to ascertain evidence and found none to substantiate the claim.

In 13 chapters, with exact names of victims as far as possible, places, dates, even timings, Aziz's book makes one shudder at the extreme cruelties inflicted

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STEALTH, CONVICTION AND THE BOMB

Just how did Pakistan, a country with so few resources and a dysfunctional state apparatus, manage to bypass Western intelligence and withstand subsequent global pressure to become a nuclear power? MUSAHAID HUSSAIN SAYED narrates a story of unwavering conviction and consistent effort.

DURING a 90-minute meeting in August 2016 in Ankara, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan recalled an interesting conversation for us. "The French foreign minister once told me that Pakistan managed to develop its nuclear programme and became a nuclear power since they (the West) were too preoccupied confronting the Soviet Union during the Cold War. 'Never again will we allow any other Muslim country to have the bomb'," he quoted the French official as saying.

But just how did Pakistan — a poor country with no oil, unlike Iran, Iraq or Libya (who each tried but failed to get the bomb) — an inefficient, unstable state which often lacked coordination, manage to evade scrutiny, bypass the might of the West and build the bomb? Five reasons stand out.

First, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's vision, which he enunciated within the first month of taking office during his famous Multan meeting with nuclear scientists in January 1972, as well as his indomitable will to translate that vision into reality.

Second, the inspiring leadership of Dr A.Q. Khan and his competent and committed team of dedicated scientists, who worked with a crusader's zeal to make the bomb.

Third, the Afghan War during the height of the Cold War, which provided convenient cover for pursuing the nuclear project, as the United States and the West were totally focussed on confronting the Soviet Union.

Fourth, pursuing the project on a war footing with a one-window operation, bypassing 'the system' and keeping the nuclear project a separate, autonomous entity — a 'state within a state' unencumbered by red tape and the drudgery of drafting PC-Is, having to be audited, seeking budget approvals, or having work interrupted by intrusive bosses.

Fifth, Bhutto's three-man committee under Ghulam Ishaq Khan, which included A.G.N. Kazi and Agha Shahi — all three civil servants of unimpeachable integrity, committed Pakistani nationalists who could neither be bought nor pressured. Agha Shahi provided Dr Khan and his core team diplomatic passports to facilitate their travel, while the Pakistan Army's Corps of Engineers created a Special Works Organisation for the construction of the Kahuta. Lt Gen Ali Zamin Naqvi, who was in charge of security for the project, had his own team, with no interference from even intelligence outfits like the ISI or the IB.

The senior scientists' troika of Prof Dr Abdus Salam, Dr I.H. Usmani and Munir Ahmed Khan, plus

other top scientists from the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), like Dr Ashfaq Ahmed and Dr Samar Mubarakmand, also deserve credit because, in their own ways, they helped create a vast and enabling science and technology infrastructure that made the pursuit of the bomb more feasible. Through their efforts, hundreds of foreign-trained, skilled scientists were put to work on the nuclear project.

Pakistan's quest for the bomb was predicated on a dual plank approach: 'Strategic Ambiguity' (always denying nuclear ambitions, but never ruling them out either); and 'Selective Messaging' (building on strategic ambiguity, selective messaging was used whenever there was a perceived threat and an enemy needed to be deterred, as was the case in 1984, 1987 and 1990).

In 1984, when Indira Gandhi was facing the Khalistan insurgency, which she blamed on Pakistan, India, in collusion with Israel, had planned an Iraq-type air raid to destroy Kahuta. However, the CIA tipped General Zia off. It was then that selective messaging first came into play. Dr Khan 'revealed' during a February 10, 1984, media interview that Pakistan had already achieved capability to produce weapons-grade uranium, and "in the event of the destruction of Kahuta, more than one such plant can be set up in Pakistan".

A fortnight later, on February 27, 1984, Gen Zia confirmed the statement in remarks to the media. In April 1984, English daily *The Muslim* (of which I was then the editor) was given the government's blessing to organise the first-ever Pakistan-India Track-II in Islamabad. It brought in

prominent Indian journalists and opinion leaders and helped create an embryonic 'peace constituency' in mainstream Indian media. The raid never took place.

In January 1987, when India organised the largest military manoeuvres in the history of South Asia since 1947, fear developed in Pakistan that Exercise Brasstacks could be the precursor of Operation Brasstacks, with Indian forces having converged closer to the land border.



Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif visits the site of Pakistan's nuclear test in the aftermath of May 28, 1998 at the Ras Koh Hills in the Chagai District of Balochistan. (Courtesy: White Star Photo)

an uncharacteristically harsh message, which the usually soft-spoken foreign minister conveyed to his Indian counterpart, I.K. Gujral.

"War clouds are hovering over the subcontinent,"

he simply warned. At the same time, the US intelligence claimed to have 'picked up' some nuclear-related activity in Pakistan, causing President Bush to rush his Deputy National Security Adviser Robert Gates to Pakistan and India, which helped in the defusion of the crisis.

No wonder that 25 years later, on August 31, 2012, India's National Security Adviser, Shiv Shankar Menon, complained in a speech to a disarmament conference in New Delhi: "On at least three occasions before 1998, some powers used explicit or implicit threats of nuclear blackmail to try and change India's behaviour."

India apart, the United States was among those implacably opposed to Pakistan's acquisition of the bomb. On at least two occasions, massive American pressure was put on Pakistan apart from the sanctions already in place.

In August 1979, after the US discovered the Kahuta Complex, the Americans deliberately leaked a story to *The New York Times* which stated that the US was preparing plans to "disable" it. A worried Gen Zia despatched a high-powered delegation to Washington in October 1979 for talks with the Carter administration.

Foreign Minister Agha Shahi led the delegation, which included three-star generals K.M. Arif, Sahibzada Yaqub and Ghulam Jilani Khan. The Americans remained unconvinced, and Agha Shahi was bluntly told that, by pursuing the nuclear programme, "you are entering the Valley of Death".

Interestingly, around the same time that this delegation was weaving circles around the Americans regarding the 'peaceful nature' of the Pakistani nuclear programme, Gen Zia had secretly directed his trusted nuclear scientist, Dr Ashfaq Ahmed, to go scouting for the site of a future nuclear test. The Chagai site was chosen in October 1979, some 19 years before the actual test!

Later, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, when the Soviet Union was collapsing and America's imperial hubris was at its height after it proclaimed a New World Order, US under-secretary of state Reginald Bartholomew visited Pakistan in November 1991 with a one-point agenda: make Islamabad roll back the nuclear programme.

After icy interactions with the prime minister and the army chief, he had a stormy meeting with president Ghulam Ishaq Khan, who put him on the spot with his amazing command of facts, figures and the law. The senior American diplomat angrily walked

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BETWEEN AMBITION AND CONSTRAINTS

Pakistan's foreign policy has been underpinned by security concerns rooted in its own traumas. It is largely independent and focused on self-interest but subject to pragmatic constraints and shaped by internal political impulses, argues RIAZ MOHAMMAD KHAN.



Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is flanked by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and President Houari Boumédiène of Algeria at a reception at the Shalimar Gardens during the Islamic Summit in Lahore held between 22 and 24 February 1974. (Courtesy: DEMP Islamabad)

IT is difficult to generalise, but a common thread runs through the critical decisions that have shaped Pakistan's foreign relations over three-quarters of a century. The distinct and recognisable character of Pakistan's foreign policy has been underpinned by security concerns rooted in the traumatic circumstances of its independence, a deep sense of injustice over Kashmir and an intrinsic pragmatism needed for restraint and the ability to pull back from the brink.

A country's foreign policy cannot be separated from its domestic strengths and cohesion. Successes and failures of foreign policy are organically linked to domestic strengths and weaknesses and, by that token, to the quality of national leadership and institutions. Punching above one's weight is often delusional, and often so is fixation with an activist foreign policy.

Foreign policy by itself cannot compensate for domestic ills. Adventures can be costly and only affordable by continental powers because of their size, wide options to act and capacity to withstand setbacks. Foreign policy suffers when dragged into domestic politics. Lack of essential institutional coordination frequently results in miscalculation.

Without offering an in-depth evaluation of their positive or negative impact, the text here highlights some of the significant decisions and developments relevant to Pakistan's foreign policy to give a sense of its trajectory and challenges.

Controversies, partly fuelled by partisan politics, often swirl around major policy choices which mark milestones in our diplomatic history. They need to be judged in the context and pressures of the time.

Take two examples: Liaquat Ali Khan's visit to the United States in 1950, and Pakistan's decision to oppose the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979. Many believe that Liaquat's visit to the US was a wrong turn from which our foreign policy never recovered. Regardless of the doubts about the invitation from Moscow, the question is: what was the choice for a new country facing extremely stressful circumstances, with survival at stake? Moscow could not have accorded precedence to its relations with Pakistan over those with India.

The 1954 alliance with the US arguably contributed to Pakistan's defence capability to the extent that in 1965, we initiated Operation Gibraltar, and our armed forces could thwart the full force of an Indian attack. Linked speculation that the US held Pakistan back from its advance in the Jhumb-Jorian sector ignores the fact that India had decided to attack across the international border. Prime minister Shastri announced India's intention, which president Ayub Khan could not have overlooked. The decision about our US alliance was understandable, but our leadership clearly misjudged if not misinterpreted its limits.

We failed to take advantage of the alliance to build a broad-based relationship with the United States when that opportunity existed. India succeeded even in the absence of an alliance. Like their Soviet counterparts, American academics and policymakers nurtured a fascination for India. I recall Ambassador Aziz Ahmed expressing exasperation in his unpublished memoirs over his unsuccessful effort at an exclusive three-hour dinner (President Kennedy, Secretary Dean Rusk, Ambassador Aziz and their spouses) to convince Kennedy about

the unreliability of the Indians. Perhaps a look at a map could explain JFK's reticence.

PAKISTAN-CHINA BOND

Pakistan's disappointment with the US tilt towards India after the 1962 Sino-Indian border skirmishes carried the seed for the singularly significant turn in shaping strategic understanding and cooperation between Pakistan and China. Pakistan was among the first few countries to recognise the Peoples Republic in January 1950, and Muhammad Ali Bogra met Zhou Enlai at Bandung in April 1955.

In the early 1960s, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto recorded a perceptive note on a file: "In the vastness of Asia, buffeted by currents of history, Pakistan and China appeared to be poised to forge a bond like that between India and the Soviet Union". Bhutto was prophetic on Pakistan-China relations, which enjoy a rare consensus in Pakistan as a foreign policy success.

Our role in 1970-71 as a trusted channel instrumental in the momentous rapprochement between China and the US was eventually reduced to a footnote in history. At the time, it won the gratitude of Beijing and Washington, and drew the ire of Moscow. Both factored into the fateful events of 1971, which were essentially of our own making and unfolded as if with a preordained certainty.

AFGHANISTAN CONUNDRUM

The assessment of Pakistan's Afghanistan policy is still tentative. The defeat of two superpowers' military interventions in Afghanistan largely owed to their errors and the intrepid valour of the Afghans. Pakistan's policy decisions, especially to oppose the 1979 Soviet intervention, were also critical.

Pakistan made mistakes. We failed to respond to Gorbachev's offer in late 1986 (well before the Geneva Accords) for cooperation to put together a broad-based government in Kabul. We mishandled the Jalalabad operation in 1989. Success could have led to an Afghan Mujahedin interim government inside Afghanistan. Another egregious misstep was the space provided to foreign jihadist elements.

The question arises: did Pakistan have another strategic option in 1979? I recall discussions about Moscow's motive and possible Soviet thrust towards 'warm waters'. What weighed in decisively was the historical pattern of Soviet pressure on countries once Moscow consolidated its control over neighbouring territory. Pakistan was, however, cautious and resisted naming the Soviet Union in UN resolutions. The Mujahedin groups coalesced in part by default rather than by a wilful Pakistani plan.

Experience in Afghanistan and then in Iraq and Syria, and now in Ukraine, has lessons that should deter ambitious powers. As for Pakistan, the Afghan conflict inflicted on it huge economic and political costs and loss of human lives. The country saw the rise of extremism and religious militancy.

Pakistan drew a wrong lesson from its encouragement of non-state actors in Afghanistan and for their possible role in finding a just resolution to Kashmir. The Afghan *jihad* had a different global context as the last front of the Cold War. Later, when Pakistan tried to control them, these elements turned their guns inwards. Politically unsettled Afghanistan also attracted alienated extremists from all over the Islamic world.

Then, 9/11 sucked Pakistan into the so-called 'war on terror'. Strategically, Pakistan had little choice: it could not deny the United States air/land corridors or even use of airbases for access to landlocked Afghanistan. However, Pakistan should not have allowed the Americans any say in handling problems in our border regions.

The US gained leverage through a poorly negotiated Coalition Support Fund. Pakistan did not, but should have charged for air/land corridors and bases instead of reimbursements for its own deployments along the border. In 2008-11, Pakistan also failed to restrict US drone attacks.

The return of the Taliban has placed an avowedly Pakistan-friendly government in Kabul. Yet, this government is antiquated, internationally unacceptable, and an encouragement to religious militancy in Pakistan. The TTP remains based inside Afghanistan and largely unchecked.

The other Pakistani concern, regarding the Durand Line, is complex. No Afghan government is likely to settle this emotive issue. Pakistan should be satisfied with Afghan acquiescence in treating the Line as a de facto border. In fact, the Soviet and the American interventions have practically reinforced the Line as a de jure international border.

A significant benefit accruing to Pakistan was that the Afghan conflict deflected the early US pressures on its nuclear programme. In a conversation with Najamuddin Sheikh and myself in 2011, former Secretary of State George Shultz remarked that, "We [the Americans] knew what Pakistan was doing", but "we turned our face away" in the interest of cooperation (on Afghanistan).

Pakistan crossed the threshold for uranium enrichment well before the Soviet withdrawal. The political decision for the programme was taken by Bhutto. It became a national priority following the 1974 Indian test. Credit for the success must go to the scientists, especially to Dr A.Q. Khan, who brought an untested technology and with his team improvised it to introduce a third route for producing critical fissile material when the other two methods, developed at the Manhattan Project in the 1940s, were barred to Pakistan.

The domestic effort for the programme was accompanied by a complementary diplomatic approach led by Agha Shahi, with proposals such as a joint commitment with India not to test, the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, and negative security guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon states. Even as a cover, this was successful diplomacy, especially in multilateral forums.

Nuclear deterrence is now integral to Pakistan's security. It provides unconventional equivalence in a country's defensive ability to face a more powerful adversary, but carries little advantage for a military offensive. Pakistan maintains a doctrine of minimum credible deterrence, which subsumes ample latitude to develop what we need and is within our capability. Any further qualification, such as full-spectrum deterrence, is unnecessary.

An exceptional responsibility that devolves on a state possessing nuclear weapons is their safety. Like in the other cases, Pakistan's armed forces are the custodian of these strategic assets. Therefore, the discipline and integrity of the armed forces is an imperative that must weigh uppermost in the minds of the country's civil and military leadership under all circumstances.

Pakistan possesses a fairly developed nuclear deterrent with reliable delivery systems. Pakistani political narratives sometimes express fear of Indian hegemony. Yet no nuclear weapon state is known to accept hege-

mony, regional or global, or to act as a satellite of another state. Pakistan cannot be an exception, notwithstanding that Pakistan is the only nuclear-weapon state with shaky politics and chronic dependence on outside economic assistance.

For nuclear power generation, a timely diplomatic initiative in 2003 led to an overarching agreement for cooperation with China which has already added four nuclear power plants (2700MW capacity) with more in the pipeline.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

A most consequential cost of its involvement with the Afghan conflict was that Pakistan lost opportunities created by globalisation. The neglect of the economy at the policy levels has, however, deeper roots.

First is the overarching security-state paradigm. Following the 1998 tests, the argument that Pakistan could afford to divert some resources from defence to socio-economic development drew a counter-assertion that to keep the deterrence threshold high, it was necessary to maintain a high level of conventional preparedness.

Second, Pakistan never recovered from the 1973 nationalisation of industry. No less a person than Premier Zhou Enlai had advised against this step when Bhutto revealed his intention during his Beijing visit in January 1972. Zhou cited China's own adverse experiences.

Third, although Ziaul Haq partly reversed the nationalisation of industry, he remained preoccupied externally with the Afghan conflict and internally with Islamisation. Educational institutions came under Islamist influences, in particular Jamat-i-Islami. Education in science and engineering regressed.

Fourth, extremist violence, partly the result of Pakistan's participation in the 'war on terror', spawned an environment toxic to economic investment. Foreign assistance helped, and economic reforms under Musharraf were meant to be investment-friendly, but nothing could offset insecurity. Furthermore, as Mahathir told him in April 2000, Pakistan had "already missed the bus".

Fifth, Pakistan's dysfunctional political system is not conducive to sustained economic growth. Institutional capacity is weak. The Foreign Office lacked focus on economic diplomacy. Many distinguished Pakistani diplomats had a certain élan for geopolitics and intellectually often conflated national interest with the security interest. Debate on geo-economics is recent, although it now enjoys the blessing of the security establishment.

Responsibility for the promotion of foreign trade and investment is shared among the Foreign Office, the Commerce Ministry and the Economic Affairs Division, with inevitable turf friction. The larger issue is, nevertheless, the national economy itself. How much can officials be blamed when there is little surplus or diversity of exportable goods?

Nationalisation followed by decades of religious conservatism depleted business culture, inhibiting the outreach necessary for the private sector to compete and operate internationally.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

The year 1971 was the most traumatic of our national experience. It was essentially a domestic crisis. Speaking to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*

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A TALE OF BAD BLOOD AND BABY STEPS

Pakistan and India have had a toxic relationship since Partition. Is there hope for a rapprochement between the two bitter rivals and how might this be achieved, asks KHURSHID MAHMUD KASURI.



Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, at the start of a five-day trip to Pakistan commencing September 19, 1960, and Pakistani President Ayub Khan, ride through Abdullah Haroon Road (old Victoria Road) in Karachi in a Cadillac convertible after the signing of the historic Indus Waters Basin Treaty, with Eugene R. Black, President of the World Bank as the main witness.

THE relationship between Pakistan and India is decidedly unique. In order to understand this strange and complex relationship, which arouses both the best and the worst of our emotions at different times and has resulted in a strange obsession with each other, we must delve long into our shared history, as well as its many distortions by vested interests.

Pakistan and India are not peculiar in that there have been attempts to rewrite history in all modern states which acquired independence in the second half of the 20th century. Other nations, too, have recast their past to support their national narratives. India and Pakistan, however, have indulged in such revisionism more than others, and have also paid a higher price for it. One could say that Pakistani and Indian revisionists have gone so far as to ‘murder’ their history.

Consider, for example, that even the favourite villain of modern-day Hindutva bigots, Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir, had many Hindu generals in his army. Jai Singh, Aurangzeb’s great general, fought against Shivaji on behalf of Aurangzeb. In some cases, Aurangzeb offered grants and land for the maintenance of temples. Later, leading Muslim and Hindu chiefs united under Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor, during the War of Independence in 1857.

Coming to more modern times, Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah is painted as a bigoted communalist in Indian history books, and it is never pointed out that he was himself in the Indian National Congress at one time. He was considered by many Congress leaders, like Sarojini Naidu, Mahatma Gandhi and others, as an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Similarly, in Pakistani textbooks, Gandhi is painted as a scheming Hindu politician who said one thing and meant another. It is never pointed out that he actually went on a hunger strike to force the Congress to hand over Pakistan’s assets after partition and that, for this reason alone, he was regarded by many bigoted Hindus as a friend of Muslims and Pakistan. He was murdered on this account by an extremist, Nathuram Godse, a member of the Hindu Mahasabha.

H.M. Seervai, the famous Indian jurist and author, writes that religious sentiment was first introduced into politics by Gandhi, not Jinnah. Moreover, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Jaswant Singh and Stanley Wolpert hold that the division of India was more the work of the Congress leadership than the Muslim League’s, since the Quaid had already accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan.

This is not to deny that distrust between the Hindu and Muslim communities was not there before partition. There were many periods, nevertheless, where the two communities lived in harmony. In fact, until the advent of the Modi government in 2014, and more so post-2019, many Indians used to proudly proclaim the virtues of the syncretic nature of their *Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb*, which had evolved between the ‘Doab’ region of the Ganges and Jamuna rivers. There was also a lot of cultural and architectural fusion. It was the bloodshed and suffering at the time of partition, unparalleled in modern history, that had an extremely negative impact on future relations between India and Pakistan.

From Pakistan’s perspective, it is believed that a section of the Indian leadership had been wishing an early end for Pakistan ever since partition. From the very early days, therefore, the Pakistani leadership was determined to do everything in its power to prevent this from happening.

This naturally increased animosity between the two countries. The Kashmir war of 1947-48, the 1965 war, the 1971 war, and the Kargil war in 1999, as well as the

near-war situations in 1987 at the time of Operation Brasstacks, and the 1990 confrontation on the borders at the time of the Hazratbal incident in Kashmir and others, served to ensure the continuation of hostile feelings between the two countries.

Recently, the two countries engaged in aerial combat between their air forces in 2019. Despite these hostilities, however, neither country has been able to achieve their objective regarding the changing of the territorial status quo in occupied Kashmir.

War is clearly not an option. Forget nuclear war, which no sane person can contemplate; even conventional war is now unthinkable since both armies have now achieved the capacity to cause immense damage to each other. This is not just my view: it is also the view of British, American, and Indian writers on the subject.

In the words of authors George Perkovich and Toby Dalton in *Not War, Not Peace?*, “India and Pakistan are approaching rough symmetry at three levels of competition: sub-conventional, conventional and nuclear.” Likewise, *Dragon on Our Doorstep*, by eminent Indian authors Pravin Sawhney, a defence analyst and former Indian army officer, and Ghazala Wahab, concludes that war is not an option for India. Of course, it is not an option for Pakistan either.

I am not surprised that many have grave doubts about whether talks can really be restored at a time when Hindutva supporters are terrorising both minorities and the BJP’s political opponents; when the Taj Mahal has been described as a ‘blot on Indian culture’ built by ‘traitors’; when Muslims are being lynched for either eating beef or trading in meat; and when Pakistan is being accused by India of all sorts of wrongdoings.

I agree that the current situation is not at all propitious for a meaningful dialogue. The question is: how long can this last? The rising business community in India will soon find the atmosphere counter-productive to its interests in an age of globalisation.

Sticking to rabid Hindutva will come with steep costs. Consider the recent blasphemous comments made by leaders of the ruling Hindu nationalist BJP, which sparked a lot of tension in the Muslim world and led to the BJP’s suspension of its spokesperson. Arab social media had been ablaze with anger. Countries ranging from Saudi Arabia and Iran, to the Maldives and Indonesia lodged official protests against Modi’s government, with some business groups asking for a boycott of Indian goods.

I am aware that a lot of negativity has been engendered by Hindutva supporters under the Modi government. But the cost of this polarisation, as we now know, has been quite high: both in terms of social instability in the country and its rapid economic decline. A recent book, *Price of the Modi Years*, by India’s respected author, journalist and human rights activist Aakar Patel, gives exhaustive details of India’s economic decline.

Is there hope? Some Indians regard Pakistan army as a major impediment. My experience in dealing with the military leadership, specifically on the Kashmir issue, suggests that the army is neither opposed to, nor is a roadblock to better relations with India. I can thus speak with confidence, at least regarding the military’s attitude to backchannel talks with India on Kashmir during my tenure.

During the course of discussions on Kashmir, spanning over approximately three years, input from the army leadership was neither rhetorical nor laced with ideological spin often associated with mid-level officers. It was invariably supported by reason and informed perspectives.

Prominent Indian politician and analyst Mani

Shankar Aiyar, India’s former petroleum minister as well as former foreign service officer, reached the same conclusion: “I do not think the objective record makes for any insuperable difficulty in India dealing directly with the Pakistan military or with a civilian government that has the military breathing down its neck. It was indubitably during the Ayub regime that the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) was signed. The IWT has weathered three wars and continues to offer a forum for the resolution of water disputes, as witnessed in the recent spats over Baglihar and now Kishanganga. Yes, the battle in the Rann of Kutch in April 1965, and Operation Gibraltar in August that year, followed by the September war, took place in the Ayub dispensation, but much of that seems to have been stoked as much by civilian political forces as by the armed forces.”

A recent speech by the Pakistan army chief, delivered on March 18, 2021, needs no elaboration and is worth quoting. “This geo-economic vision is centred around four core pillars: one, moving towards a lasting and enduring peace within and outside; two, non-interference of any kind in the internal affairs of our neighbouring and regional countries; three, boosting intra-regional trade and connectivity; [and] four, bringing sustainable development and prosperity through the establishment of investment and economic hubs within the region.”

Apart from the IWT and the Rann of Kutch dispute, which were settled through international mediation, even the 1965 war was ultimately resolved between the two countries through the Tashkent Agreement in 1966 under the auspices of the government of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

In Kashmir, various moves have been made over the years to reach a negotiated settlement. The inspiration for these moves comes from the vision of Quaid-i-Azam, who hoped for a friendly and cooperative relationship between Pakistan and India provided they could resolve the issue of Jammu and Kashmir in a just and fair manner.

Over the years, Pakistani leaders have reached the conclusion that a solution to the dispute cannot be reached without Pakistan, India and the people of Kashmir agreeing to it. This envisages mutual flexibility, while UN Security Council resolutions form the basis of Pakistan’s claim as a party to the dispute.

Starting with prime minister Feroze Khan Noon, to president Ayub Khan, to the Bhutto-Swaran Singh talks and including recent leaders like Nawaz Sharif, Benazir Bhutto, Pervez Musharraf and Imran Khan, all have attempted to resolve the dispute through dialogue. President Musharraf recognised this increasingly after assuming office.

The nearest that Pakistan and India came to resolving the issue of Jammu and Kashmir was between 2004 and 2007, when I was the foreign minister. The two countries actually drafted an agreed framework for the resolution of Jammu and Kashmir, commonly known as the Four-Point Formula.

The details of the agreement, which I discussed in my book, *Neither a Hawk Nor a Dove*, have not been contradicted by any Pakistani or Indian of consequence. In fact, the book launch was attended by the principals on the two sides themselves: Parvez Musharraf, Manmohan Singh and India’s former leader of the opposition L.K. Advani. Each had been provided advance copies. I thus believe that given the political will, even this issue can be resolved.

Narendra Modi cannot rule India forever. Even at the best of times, he was able to secure about 37pc of the total vote, with an overwhelming majority voting

for parties who are by and large opposed to the current policies of the BJP government on Muslims, Kashmir and Pakistan. He gains only as a result of divisions within the opposition.

Under present projections, most Indian analysts believe that Modi will win the next elections regardless of his mishandling of the economy and Covid. International observers and even some Indian writers and commentators have now started accepting the fact that India has lost Kashmiris and is only in possession of their land by force; that this position is untenable and, therefore, either the Modi government or its substitute, in due course, will find wisdom in the words of Vajpayee.

In his article ‘Kumarakom Musings’, Vajpayee openly admitted that two things were keeping India from achieving its potential at the international level: its problem with Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute, and the demolition of Babri Masjid. Prime minister Manmohan Singh showed equal wisdom in agreeing to a framework for the solution of the issue.

THE WAY FORWARD

I am aware that nothing major can happen in the current circumstances, but baby steps can still be suggested.

Media engagement: I engaged extensively with media in both countries to create an enabling environment for the agreed framework on Jammu and Kashmir, and this helped in changing entrenched negative attitudes. There is a need to allow representatives of major newspapers and news channels from both countries to be posted in each other’s major cities to create better awareness and increase human empathy.

Religious exchanges: Group tourism and religious pilgrimages to Kartarpur, the restored Katas Raj Temple, Hinglaj Mata Temple and various Muslim ‘dargahs’ will also be helpful.

Trade: According to a 2018 World Bank report entitled *Glass Half Full: Promise of Regional Trade in South Asia*, trade between Pakistan and India could be as high as \$37 billion. It could be higher now.

People-to-people contact: I know how far we can go if the leadership of the two countries makes efforts with a positive frame of mind. Even public opinion can be changed, as we managed to do during our tenure by encouraging people-to-people contact and through a positive narrative regarding the progress that we were making. In the past (as now), cricket matches were the substitute for battlefields. We had an opportunity to witness the last one-day match of the Pakistan-India cricket series in Delhi in 2005, where Pakistan won both the match and the series. I discovered no hostility. Instead, a carnival-like atmosphere prevailed in the stadium.

I also remember the cricket match in Lahore, where Pakistan lost. Instead of showing hostility towards the visiting team, the young men and women of Lahore applauded the winning team. Given the right political direction, the sky is the limit.

Meaningful dialogue between Pakistan and India will enable them to focus on improving the socio-economic indicators of their people, which are perhaps the worst in the world. We are still home to almost half of the world’s poor, whereas China has lifted a massive number of people above the poverty line. Pakistan and India need to start a meaningful dialogue soon. As indicated above, a win-win formula for Kashmiris, Pakistanis and Indians does exist.

The writer is a former foreign minister.

CONJOINED IN A TROUBLED REGION

Pak-Afghan ties were frosty in 1947, hostile during the pendency of the Afghan-sponsored Pashtunistan project, and complicated after the Afghan Jihad in the 1980s. ISMAIL KHAN discusses the fault lines in a complex geo-political relationship.



President Mohammad Ayub Khan arrives in Kabul on a two-day visit to Afghanistan, in response to an invitation extended by King Zahir Shah. Considerable significance was attached to this visit which was held a week before the impending Tashkent Summit talks (which began on January 10, 1966) due to Indian Prime Minister Shastri's intended visit to Kabul before Tashkent. (Courtesy: Ayub Khan Archives/Tahir Ayub)

PAKISTAN and Afghanistan are “conjoined twins”, declared the then Afghan president Hamid Karzai during a visit to Islamabad; one of the 21 trips to Pakistan he made while in office. But the relationship between these twins has been mired by decades of mistrust, deep suspicion and at times antagonism. It is a love-hate relationship. And there is a history behind it.

The relationship started off on the wrong foot at the very outset, in September 1947, when Pakistan applied for membership of the United Nations. Afghanistan was the sole country to oppose Pakistan's membership, citing its objection to the permanence of the Durand Line — the border that divides the two countries. Kabul withdrew its opposition in October the same year after Pakistan agreed to talk about the differences, but the damage had been done.

Pakistan continued to view with suspicion the Afghans' support to Pakhtun and Baloch nationalists. Daud Khan, a cousin of king Zahir Shah, spearheaded the 'Pashtunistan' campaign as ambassador. Later when he became the prime minister and president of Afghanistan, he established Tribal Riasat (directorate) and then upgraded it to the status of a full-scale ministry in 1973 to oversee the tribal region and Pakhtun and Baloch areas of Pakistan.

THE DAUD ERA

The relationship between the countries started to deteriorate more quickly when he became prime minister in 1953. It came to a head with two incursions into Bajaur tribal region from Afghanistan's eastern Kunar province in 1960 and 1961. Pakistan repulsed the two attacks using military and air force to inflict heavy casualties on the other side.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries got ruptured, with Pakistan imposing an economic blockade on the landlocked country. It would take some efforts by friendly countries to restore the diplomatic relationship and persuade Pakistan to lift the economic embargo in May 1963.

This, however, prompted the Afghans to look towards the Soviet Union which helped built the Salang Highway to open a trade route from Uzbekistan to Kabul. This would be the first time the Soviets were able to find a firm footing and influence in Kabul, which would come to haunt the Afghans later.

ZAHIR SHAH'S OUSTER

Not happy with the policies of his cousin, Daud Khan led a bloodless coup of loyal army officers to overthrow king Zahir Shah in July 1973. Shah was in Rome at the time, undergoing eye surgery. Khan abolished the kingdom, declared Afghanistan a republic and became its president.

A staunch nationalist, Khan had initially warmed up to the Soviets, bringing in some communists from the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) into the cabinet, but later moved to establish relations with other countries as well.

During his initial years in power, Khan fervently supported 'Pashtunistan', openly supporting Pakhtun and Baloch nationalists, inviting them to Kabul and treating them as state guests, offending Pakistan. The period also saw a spate of terrorist activities in Pakistan, prompting Islamabad to blame Kabul for fomenting

trouble in the North-West Frontier Province — later to become Khyber Pakhtunkhwa — and Balochistan.

It was also around this time when Khan cracked down on dissidents, forcing some of the leading Islamists to take refuge in Pakistan. Among them was Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who would later form his own insurgent group, Hezb-i-Islami Afghanistan, and become a leading figure in the fight against the Soviets. Other Islamists followed suit.

Irked by Daud's continued overt and covert support to Pakhtun and Baloch nationalists and a spate of terrorist attacks, including the one that killed well-known politician and former governor Hayat Khan Sherpao, prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto decided to get even by using the Afghan Islamists against his Afghan rival.

This evidently had some sobering effect. The two sides made overtures and the relationship between the 'conjoined twins' was back on track, with both Daud and Bhutto exchanging visits to Islamabad and Kabul.

SAUR REVOLUTION

Trouble, however, was brewing at home for Daud Khan. The murder of a communist ideologue in April 1978 caused friction with the PDPA, prompting Khan to order the arrest of key communist leaders. Noor Mohammad Taraki, Babrak Karmal and other top leaders were taken into custody, while Hafizullah Amin was placed under house arrest.

Fearing he could be toppled, Daud Khan put the military on high alert on April 26, 1978, but little did he know that the man he had put under house arrest — Hafizullah Amin — had orchestrated and organised a coup already. On April 27, troops moved from their base near Kabul Military Academy, and by April 28, it was all over for Daud Khan.

The PDPA had taken over and Daud Khan and his family were brutally murdered inside the Presidential Palace. Their bodies were found years later in two mass graves outside the walls of the notorious Pul-i-Charkhi prison in Kabul during the Karzai presidency.

The coup was hailed as the Saur Revolution. The PDPA declared Afghanistan a democratic republic. Taraki, a writer, was made the chairman of the revolutionary council to rule the new democratic republic. But his rule proved short-lived. He was overthrown by American-educated communist ideologue Hafizullah Amin in September 1979 and was murdered the following month.

Amin's stint in power turned out to be even shorter. The revolt within the country, desertions and defections in the army rank and file, and execution of dissidents had made him a liability for the PDPA's principal backers, the Soviets.

RED ARMY MARCHES IN

Worried that things were getting out of hand, the Soviets invoked the 1978 treaty of friendship and invaded Afghanistan. Amin was assassinated on December 27, 1979 inside the heavily fortified Tajbeg Palace in Kabul. Both Daud and Amin wanted to have better ties with Pakistan towards the fag end of their respective tenures.

The Soviets brought back Babrak Karmal, a Marxist politician, from exile and handed him the reins of Afghanistan. Karmal found himself in a very difficult situation. The Soviet invasion drove millions of Afghans into exile as refugees into Pakistan and Iran. Desertions and defections in the military became endemic.

The Soviet invasion catapulted the anti-communist resistance and transformed it into a full-scale war, supported by Pakistan with the help of the United States-led coalition and the Saudis. For Gen Ziaul Haq, this was as good an opportunity as any to get endear himself to the West.

CONTOURS OF AFGHAN JIHAD

Zia masterly aligned what he believed was Pakistan's best interest with that of the West to prevent the 'expansionist' Soviets from reaching the 'warm waters' of the Arabian Sea. For the US, this was an opportunity to avenge its defeat in Vietnam and give the Russians a bloody nose in Afghanistan. This alignment of mutual interest spawned what came to be known as the fghan *jihad*.

Seven Islamism resistance groups based in Peshawar were trained and armed by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The Saudis funded the resistance. The CIA and an assortment of foreign intelligence services, including the British, provided sophisticated weapons that eventually turned the tables on the mighty Soviets.

Something more ominous also happened around this time. The call for *jihad* against the 'atheists' attracted radical Islamists from around the world, particularly from the Middle East. Militant Islamists from the Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt and Algeria, and others from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf flew into Pakistan.

Fiery Palestinian ideologue Abdullah Azzam, Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood leader Dr Ayman al-Zawahiri, scion of a wealthy Saudi family Osama bin Laden and others made Peshawar their permanent base to wage *jihad* in Afghanistan. Decades later, this would come to haunt Pakistan and Afghanistan and take a heavy toll on the region and its people.

As the insurgency grew in scale and tenacity and the cost of war went through the roof, the Soviets began to look for Karmal's replacement. The Kremlin became desperate. In May 1986, with full Soviet backing, Karmal was removed and was replaced with the burly Pakhtun head of Afghan intelligence and a champion of national reconciliation, Dr Mohammad Najibullah. Karmal was exiled to Russia where he died of liver cancer in 1996.

A medical graduate, Najibullah distanced himself from the communist ideology, made changes to the constitution to make Islam the official religion and presented himself as an Afghan nationalist. He reached out to the Mujahideen groups for negotiations on forming a broad-based coalition government, and inducted more non-PDPA members into the cabinet.

The Soviets, bogged down in Afghanistan, were getting even more desperate as the measures taken by Najibullah failed to achieve the desired results. The indirect negotiations between Pakistan and Afghanistan finally resulted in the Geneva Accords, with both sides agreeing to a timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1988-89. The Americans and the Russians stood as guarantors.

Contrary to predictions, however, Najibullah's regime, though largely confined to urban areas, survived the Soviet pullout and did not collapse. In fact, it overcame a coup by defence minister Shah Nawaz Tanai, who fled to Pakistan after the failure.

Sensing that the Russian assistance was going to stop soon, Najibullah resigned as president to pave the way for the UN Plan in April 1992. But the UN Plan could not succeed because a military coup was launched by

an alliance between commander Ahmad Shah Masood and Uzbek militia leader Abdur Rasheed Dostum.

When the Mujahideen entered their country from Pakistan, Kabul was already controlled by the Masood-Dostum combine. This led to civil war. Najibullah headed to the airport to board a plane to Delhi, but was caught. Thus began a power struggle amongst the Mujahideen groups despite a Pakistan-brokered power-sharing formula known as the Peshawar Accord.

ENTER THE TALIBAN

The situation led to the rise of the Taliban, led by a former Mujahideen commander and cleric Mullah Mohammad Omar. Supported by Pakistan, the Taliban swept across Afghanistan and entered Kabul in September 1996 to establish their version of the Islamic emirate.

One of their first acts upon entering the Afghan capital was to capture Dr Najibullah from the UN compound and ruthlessly murder him along with his brother, leaving their mutilated bodies hanging from poles for a couple of days before pulling them down.

Pakistan, eager to see a friendly government in Afghanistan, was the first to recognise the Taliban regime. Their policies based on strict interpretation of the religion and the decision to provide sanctuaries to international jihadists, including Al Qaeda, would soon turn Afghanistan into a pariah state. The 9/11 incident brought back the Americans, looking for Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden. Mullah Omar refused. Pakistan had to grudgingly join a US-led alliance to topple the Taliban.

Hamid Karzai, a politician living in Pakistan as a refugee, was brought in as the president of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and remained in office for 14 years, succeeded by World Bank technocrat Ashraf Ghani.

The US-led international community poured trillions of dollars into Afghanistan to develop state institutions, infrastructure and its military, but the Afghan Taliban returned to the battlefield. The ensuing conflict saw both Pakistan and Afghanistan sucked into renewed war with Washington, and Kabul accusing Islamabad of playing a double game.

Pakistan launched a series of military operations to overcome its own brand of Taliban and bring a lawless tribal region under state control. The Americans subjected Pakistani tribal regions and parts of Afghanistan to incessant drone strikes in the hunt for Al Qaeda and Pakistani Taliban leadership.

While Pakistan did manage to overcome the biggest internal security challenge in its history, the fatigued and war-weary US-led coalition gave up, leading to the Doha Agreement with the Afghan Taliban in September 2020. The US pledged to withdraw foreign forces by May 2021 without working out a power-sharing formula.

Contrary to predictions, the Taliban took one province after the other before entering Kabul in mid-August 2021 without much resistance. The Afghan security forces melted away, while Ghani boarded a helicopter and fled to Uzbekistan en route to the UAE.

The Taliban returned to power in Kabul, refusing to pay heed to international demands for an inclusive government and respect for human rights, and Pakistan was left with no choice, but to fend for them. The uncomfortable and at times irritating relationship between the 'conjoined twins' continues uncomfortably.

The writer is a staff member.

TRAPPED IN A JIHADIST QUICKSAND

Born on the battlefields of Afghanistan during the Soviet jihad, ZAHID HUSSAIN explains how the modern Pakistani militant, once used as an instrument of state policy, now seeks to overthrow the state and enforce his own brand of religion.



After 18 months of sheer provocation from the Jihadi militants-dominated Lal Masjid in the adjoining Jamia Hafsa madrasah in the federal capital of Islamabad, President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz responded with an eight-day siege beginning July 3, 2007. Although a relatively modest 154 deaths were reported as a consequence of the siege, it is believed that over 3,000 casualties were reported in the subsequent border altercations with the Taliban and as a consequence of what is referred to as the third major campaign in Waziristan. Here, Jihadi militants wearing gas masks and armed with weapons are seen stalking the perimeters of the Lal Masjid during the operation. (Courtesy: AFP/White Star Photo)

ISLAMIC radicalism and militancy present an existentialist threat to the state of Pakistan. The country has earned the dubious distinction of being one of the largest incubators of extremism. Rising religious extremism has further polarised Pakistani society and threatens to tear apart its social fabric, with massive implications for the country’s stability.

The failure of the state to enforce the rule of law and formulate a comprehensive strategy to combat militancy has given space to the extremists more than their public support implies. Pakistan thus faces daunting challenges as it stands at a critical juncture of its history.

Islamic radicalism first took root in the country during the Afghan war against the Soviets in the 1980s, when the Pakistani government, in collaboration with the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), pursued a deliberate policy of sponsoring militancy.

Afghanistan provided inspiration to a whole generation of Pakistani Islamic radicals who considered it their religious duty to fight against oppression of Muslims anywhere in the world. It gave a new dimension to the idea of *jihād*, which till then had only been employed by the state in the context of mobilising support against arch-rival India.

PRIVATISATION OF JIHAD

The Afghan war saw the privatisation of the concept of *jihād*. Militant groups emerged from the ranks of traditional religious movements, who took the path of an armed struggle. The ISI’s active role brought Pakistani army officers in direct contact with the radicals.

The first Pakistani *jihadi* groups emerged in the 1980s when thousands of volunteers — mainly students from religious seminaries — joined the anti-Soviet resistance in Afghanistan. They joined the various Afghan groups rather than using their own banners.

Long before the Afghan war was over, the ISI started organising a new *jihād* front in held Kashmir. Highly disciplined paramilitary organisations operated in the region, pursuing their own internal and external agendas.

The largest among them were Lashkari-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-i-Mohammad (JM), Harkatul Mujahideen (HuM) and Harkatul Jihad al Islami (HuJI). All these paramilitary groups, originally from the same source, had similar motivations and goals, and recruited from the same kind of people — often unemployed youth from the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The only difference was in patronage: HuM and HuJI were both strongly linked with the Afghan Taliban, while LT had strong links with Wahhabi groups in Saudi Arabia.

Those militant organisations were not clandestine nor had they sprouted surreptitiously. Their growth, if not actually sponsored, had certainly been looked upon with favour by the state. Their activities were not secret, and found expression in graffiti, wall posters and pamphlets all over the country, inviting Muslims to join forces with them.

INSTRUMENTS OF POLICY

During the 1980s and 1990s, the objective of *jihadi* movements in Pakistan was not the establishment of a global Islamic caliphate. Their objectives were more in line with the regional strategy of the Pakistani military establishment: the liberation of Kashmir from India and the installing of a Pakhtun Islamist government in Afghanistan. Almost all the Islamic militant groups served as instruments of Pakistan’s regional policy.

The rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s gave a huge boost to Pakistani militant groups like HuM and JM. Afghanistan became a base for their operations. Their leaders shared common origins, personnel and especially patrons. Many of the Pakistani militants came from the same seminaries in the border region from where the Afghan Taliban movement had emerged.

These groups were heavily backed by the Pakistani intelligence agencies, which also patronised the Afghan Taliban. Both were important in furthering Pakistan’s strategic interests — to extend Pakistani influence in Afghanistan. By 2002, Pakistan had become the home of around 24 militant groups.

POLICY TURNAROUND

Pakistan’s policy turnaround following the 9/11 attacks impelled most of the *jihadi* groups to join Al Qaeda’s war against the West. The presence of US and other Western forces in Afghanistan provided the added incentive for the creation of the new nexus. A large number of Pakistani militant cadres had already received military training in the Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime. That bond was further strengthened with their involvement in the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan against the US-led coalition forces.

As Islamabad closely aligned itself with the US, the militant Muslim

youth increasingly turned inwards and targeted the military and other state institutions. For militants, the Western presence in both Afghanistan and Pakistan was a threat to Islamic identity. This view became the ultimate rationale for jihadist militancy in Pakistan. Anything representing the enemy or anyone who did not stand with their creed, such as Nato convoys, civilians, moderate clerics, the government and its agents, were considered targets.

The American war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and Pakistan’s position as a frontline state in the so-called US war on terrorism, had contributed to the rise of a new and more violent militancy and turned the country into an Al Qaeda base.

A ‘NEW’ MILITANT

A new generation of young educated militants from urban areas, most of them splinters of mainstream Islamic political parties, like the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), joined the new jihadist movement making it a formidable terrorist network challenging the Pakistani state.

They were ideologically motivated young, middle-class professionals, products of universities rather than school dropouts or graduates of seminaries. Children of opportunity rather than deprivation, they have been the planners of many of the terrorist attacks targeting sensitive installa-

tions in Pakistan’s major cities, heralding a new phase of militancy that swept the country after 2007.

Over the years, Al Qaeda operating from borderlands had transformed with new recruits from among the Pakistani militant groups joining the ranks. The cadre Al Qaeda attracted was ideologically and politically motivated. Thousands of well-trained militants who were battle-hardened in Kashmir and Afghanistan provided ready recruits for the terrorist network.

Pakistani militant groups disintegrated into small cells after they were proscribed in 2002 and became an extension of Al Qaeda, providing the network with foot soldiers ready to die for the cause.

There were many other Pakistanis coming from the ranks of Islamist parties who also got involved with Al Qaeda operating from the mountainous border region, giving the group a new depth in Pakistan. The association of Al Qaeda operatives with the Islamist parties was not accidental; they had been the original face of *jihād* in Pakistan. Thousands of their members had joined the Mujahideen fighting against the Soviet forces. It was also the period when these parties, especially the JI, had developed close contacts with Arabs jihadists, many of whom were associated with the Muslim Brotherhood.

TTP IS BORN

It was on December 14, 2007, that some 40 militant leaders commanding some 400,000 militants gathered in South Waziristan to form a united front under the banner of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). It was a major attempt to unite different Pakistani militant groups under one umbrella.

Almost all the top militant leaders in the tribal region who formed the nucleus of the Pakistani Taliban movement were initially associated with one right-wing party or the other: Baitullah Mehsud, Hafiz Gul Bahadur and Mullah Nazir, for instance, had all grown from the ranks of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI), which was the only political party allowed to operate openly in the tribal areas. The eight-point charter called for the enforcement of Shariah rule and vowed to continue fighting against Nato forces in Afghanistan. The TTP also declared what it described as a ‘defensive’ *jihād* against the Pakistani military.

The new generation of Pakistani Taliban was more brutal than even their Afghan comrades. Beheadings and public executions of opponents and government officials became common practice. The videos of those brutal actions were then distributed to create fear. These kinds of sadistic actions were unheard of in Pakhtun culture. The brutality perpetrated by the Pakistani Taliban was influenced by Arab and Uzbek militants.

The creed of the Pakistani Taliban largely stemmed from Salafi jihadism espoused by Al Qaeda. It was also the result of Wahhabism which was spread in the region by thousands of Saudi-funded seminaries.

The TTP ended up being an extension of Al Qaeda. Its formation followed Osama bin Laden’s declaration of war against the Pakistani state in the aftermath of the siege of Islamabad’s Lal Masjid. Its charter clearly reflected Al Qaeda’s new strategy to extend its war to Pakistan. Almost all the top leaders of the new organisation had a long association with Al Qaeda. Afghan Taliban leaders were also closely involved in the formation of the organisation which owed its allegiance to Osama and Afghan Taliban supremo Mullah Mohammad Omar.

TERROR’S CHILDREN

The rise of the distinctive Pakistani Taliban movement presented a new and more violent phase of Islamic militancy in the country. The TTP has also developed a close nexus with other Pakistani militant factions which had mutated into small cells after they were proscribed in 2002.

Suicide terrorism, which targeted both the military and the civilians, saw a massive rise after the Lal Masjid incident in 2007 when Al Qaeda and its allies among the Pakistani militants declared holy war against the Pakistani state. That marked a shift in jihadist strategy, making the government and the military primary targets. Security forces accounted for more than 60pc of the targets as human bombers became the most potent weapons in the militants’ war.

Poverty, unemployment, romantic notions of *jihād* and the growing influence of militant Islamic groups are also reasons for young men to turn into suicide bombers. Mostly uneducated, they are recruited for different purposes ranging from killing Shia Muslims to liberating Muslims from ‘infidels’. The new trend of suicide bombings is packaged as a ‘ticket to paradise’. By its very nature, it is a one-way ticket.

The writer is an author and journalist.



Photo: Aamir Qureshi/AFP

Pakistan Army soldiers walk into the hideout of Islamist militants in Tang Khatta, near the town of Khar, in the troubled Bajaur agency on September 26, 2008, an incident which led to violent clashes along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border at the time of President Asif Zardari.

A SILVER LINING IN KEY INDICATORS?

DR HAFEEZ PASHA believes that Pakistan witnessed strong economic growth earlier but failed to address the larger question of inequality. He argues, however, that with respect to unemployment and corruption, Pakistan has done relatively well compared to India and Bangladesh.

THE initial economic conditions in Pakistan, what was back then West Pakistan, were very difficult. Per capita income was low, mortality rates were high and there was a big wave of migration of Muslims from India. However, despite the initial handicaps the country has made considerable progress in the last 75 years (Table 1).

It is indeed remarkable that the per capita income was only \$87 at the time of partition, with the exchange rate at close to Rs3 per US dollar. The per capita income stands at \$1,797 now, with an annual average rate of increase of over 4pc. Pakistan in 2011 moved up from low-income status to the group of lower middle-income countries (LMICs).

There have been big changes in the structure of the economy over the last 75 years. Pakistan was initially a predominantly agricultural country, with over 53pc of the GDP coming from agriculture. The largest output was of major crops, like wheat, cotton and rice, and livestock, with a share in the national economy of almost 28pc.

Industrial development was very much at its initial stages, with a share in the economy of less than 10pc. The contribution of manufacturing was less than 8pc. The industrial sector now has a share of close to 20pc. Service activities have also expanded at a relatively rapid rate. The share of these activities has increased to 58pc of the economy from 37pc in 1950. Sectors like wholesale and retail trade, transport and communications, finance and insurance have been among the fastest growing sectors in the economy.

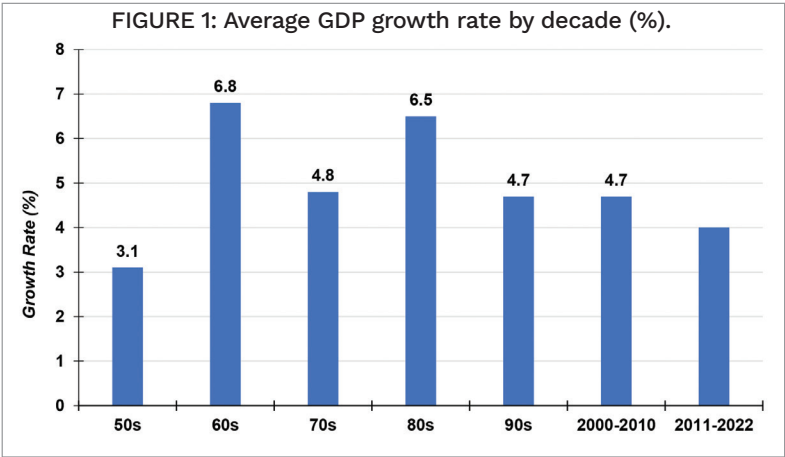
The overall decade-wise annual GDP growth rate based on the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) data is impressive (Figure 1).

HIGH-GROWTH DECADES

There have been two decades — the 1960s and the 1980s — when Pakistan achieved exceptionally high GDP growth rates of 6.8pc and 6.5pc respective-

TABLE 1: Key indicators in 1947 and 2022.

	1947	2022	Annual Growth Rate (%)
Population (million)	31.5	230.4	2.6
Per Capita Income (US \$)	80	1797	4.1
Structure of the Economy*	Shares (%)		
Agriculture	53.2		22.7
Industry	9.6		19.1
Services	37.2		58.2
Total	100.0		100.0



ly. The 1960s saw the emergence of unbridled capitalism with extraordinary support to private investment in the manufacturing sector, leading to emergence of the textile industry and exports.

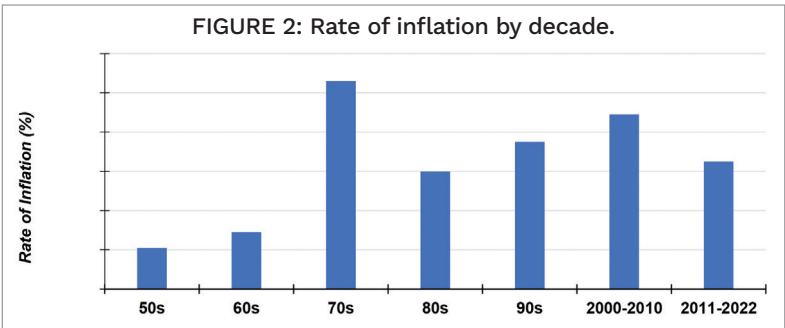
However, it culminated in large income inequality and the rise of the ‘22 families’. More emphasis on the development of West Pakistan led to the movement for the separation of East Pakistan. Foreign aid to Pakistan, mostly in the form of grants, was at its highest level in the 1960s at over 10pc of the GDP which facilitated a relatively high level of investment.

The decade of the 1970s saw initially the loss of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh. There was a shift towards socialism and the emergence of a large number of state enterprises, either through nationalisation or new investment. However, the process of nationalisation led to big retreat of the private sector and the GDP growth rate floundered.

The GDP growth rate was also above 6pc in the 1980s. The agricultural sector grew rapidly with expansion in water availability after the commissioning of the Tarbela Dam. Also, Pakistan’s support to the United States in the war in Afghanistan against the Soviet occupation led to large inflows of foreign assistance.

TABLE 2: Growth rate of exports and imports by decade.

Decade	Growth Rate (%)		Difference
	Exports	Imports	
50’s	7.8	3.4	4.4
60’s	5.7	7.2	-1.5
70’s	12.4	14.8	-2.4
80’s	7.4	3.8	3.6
90’s	5.5	4.0	1.5
2000-2010	8.1	12.1	-4.0
2010-2021	2.6	4.1	-1.5



The 1990s saw the return to democracy in Pakistan. However, there was a rapid turnover of governments and fall in the rate of investment. Nevertheless, by the end of the decade, the country became self-sufficient in wheat production due to pro-agricultural policies. Also, 1998 saw the emergence of Pakistan as an atomic power.

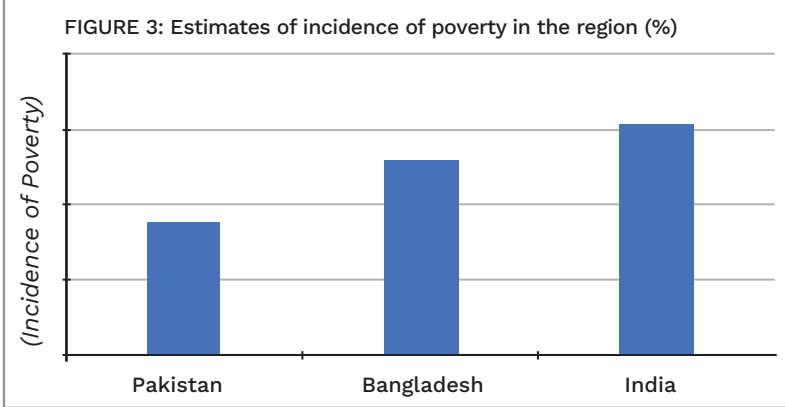
The year 1999 saw a return to military power, which lasted till 2008. Once again Pakistan become a client state supporting the US in the war against the Afghan Taliban following the happenings of 9/11. The resulting large inflow of aid and foreign investment enabled the economy to grow at an exceptionally high growth rate, for example, at 8.6pc in 2004-05.



President Ayub Khan presiding over the inaugural meeting of the Economic Council which was held in Karachi on July 1, 1959. (Courtesy: Ayub Khan Archives/ Tahir Ayub)

TABLE 3: Annual growth rate of GDP in the region (%).

Decade	Bangladesh	India	Pakistan
60’s	-	3.0	6.8
70’s	3.6	3.6	4.8
80’s	3.9	5.4	6.5
90’s	4.6	5.4	4.7
2000-2010	5.4	6.5	4.7
2010-2020	6.4	4.8	3.6
Long-Term (1960 to 2020)	4.8	4.7	4.8



FRUSTRATED GROWTH

Thereafter, the process of growth has been initially frustrated by the peak in global commodity prices in 2008 and subsequently by the emergence of high and increasing levels of power loadshedding and rampant acts of terrorism. More recently, the Covid pandemic retarded growth, and the country actually saw negative GDP growth in 2019-20. Subsequently we saw an upsurge in commodity prices once again due to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Nevertheless, it must be recognised that the long-term growth rate has averaged almost 5pc, which has contributed to a real per capita income growth rate of above 2.5pc. This has resulted in a relatively fast pace of poverty reduction.

There is a view that Pakistan has been unable to achieve a higher rate of growth due to the relative absence of export-led growth (Table 2). Out of the seven decades, the growth rate of exports has been higher than the growth rate of imports in the 1950s, the 1980s and the 1990s. However, the last two decades have seen a major widening of the trade deficit, especially from 2000 to 2010. The truly exceptional performance was in the 1970s when cotton and textile exports rose by over 17pc annually. This was also the period that saw a quantum depreciation of the exchange rate.

The rate of inflation, as per the estimates of the SBP, has also varied over the decades (Figure 2). The highest rate of inflation, which reached double digits at 10pc, was in the 1970s. This was primarily due to the quantum depreciation of the rupee by over 130pc in May 1972, in an effort to divert sales to the former East Pakistan to international markets.

Fortunately, soon after partition the rate of inflation remained low at below 3pc in the first two decades. More recently, due to both rising commodity prices and devaluation of the rupee, the rate of increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) has exceeded 13pc.

RELATIVE PERFORMANCE

Turning to the relative economic performance of the three countries of the subcontinent — Bangladesh, India and Pakistan — the annual decade-wise GDP growth rates, based on the database of the World Bank, tell their own story (Table 3).

The perhaps unexpected finding is that the long-term growth rate of the three countries is almost the same at just under 5pc. Pakistan performed exceptionally well in the 1960s and the 1980s, as highlighted earlier. India was plagued by the so-called ‘Hindu growth rate’ up to the end of the 1980s. In the 1990s, there was a comprehensive package of reforms towards economic liberalisation and there was an upsurge in the growth rate thereafter. Bangladesh started slowly, but gathered momentum with export-led growth, largely of garments, in each decade. In the last decade, it had a higher growth rate than the other two countries.

The per capita income of the three countries in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms at recent rate of US\$ (mid-June) is available on from 1990 onwards, while data for earlier years is not available (Table 4). The performance of Pakistan was distinctly better till the end of the 1980s.

Pakistan had a per capita income 59pc above that of India and 96pc above Bangladesh in 1990. The higher per capita income was maintained up to 2000 with respect to India, and up to 2010 with respect to Bangladesh. Now India has a 37pc and Bangladesh has a 14pc higher per capita income than Pakistan. However, following the recent rebasing of Pakistan’s GDP from 2005-06 to 2015-16, the per capita income in 2020 is \$5,477, which is 1.6pc higher than that of Bangladesh.

POVERTY LEVELS

The next set of findings further highlights the better position of Pakistan. The first indicator is the incidence of poverty as estimated by the World Bank (Figure 3), with the poverty line of \$3.20, according to 2011 PPP.

The big surprise is the much higher incidence of poverty in India of 61.7pc, compared to 52.3pc in Bangladesh and much less in Pakistan at 35.5pc. India has experienced much less inclusive growth. This is attributable to the caste system, marginalisation of minorities and very large disparities between rural and urban areas, and among the various states in that country.

The World Development Indicators database of the World Bank also highlights that Pakistan had a lower adjusted unemployment rate, as estimated by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), at 4.3pc in 2019, compared to 4.4pc in Bangladesh and 5.3pc in India.

There is also evidence that Pakistan was able to manage the economy better than India and Bangladesh in the aftermath of Covid. The incidence of the pandemic-related deaths was the highest in India, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) at 404 deaths per one million persons, compared to 178 in Bangladesh and 135 in Pakistan. Also, the fall in the GDP growth rate in 2020 was the largest in India at 10.3 percentage points, compared to 4.7 in Bangladesh and 4.1 in Pakistan.

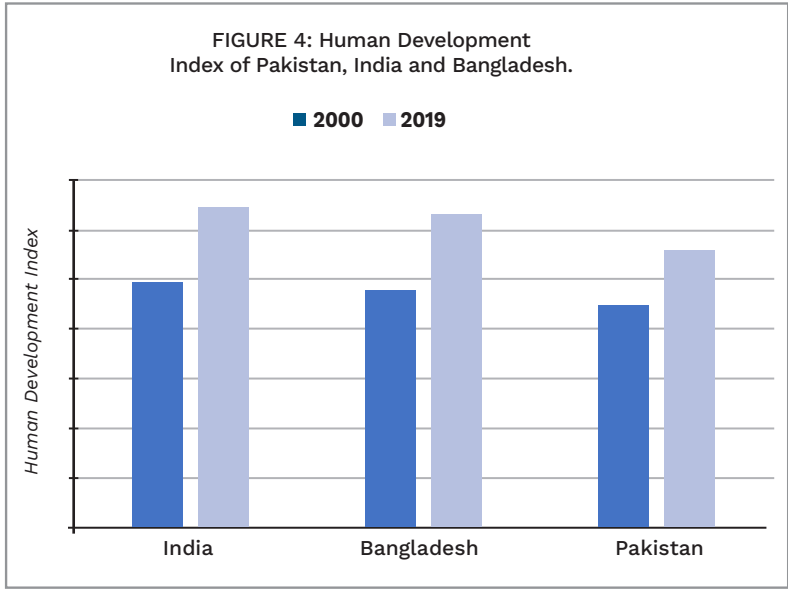
We come now to a comparison of the economic status of Muslims in India with those in Pakistan. The Muslim population in India is estimated at 213 million, 8pc less than the number of Muslims in Pakistan. The concentration of Indian Muslims is in four states, namely Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar and Assam. These states are relatively underdeveloped with lower per capita income compared to the national average per capita income level of India.

For example, Uttar Pradesh has a per capita income only 50pc of the national average. The corresponding percentages for the other three states range from 51pc to 81pc of the national average. Therefore, the dominant majority of Muslims live in the relatively underdeveloped regions of India.

The Justice Sachar Report of 2006, *Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslims of India*, also highlights that in a typical state the per capita consumption expenditure of Muslims is on average 17pc lower than that of Hindus. Also, the incidence of poverty is much higher among the Muslims. Overall, it appears that currently the average living standard of Muslims of India is almost 24pc lower than that of the Muslims in Pakistan. Given the growing discrimination in India against Muslims, this gap will become larger with time. Surely, the creation of Pakistan has been much better for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

TABLE 4: Per capita income (Current International \$) (Source: World Bank)

Countries	1990	2000	2010	2020
Bangladesh	962	1370	2640	5390
India	1190	2070	4190	6440
Pakistan	1890	2560	3820	4710



Finally, there is one indicator in which Pakistan has performed worse in an unambiguous manner since 2000 compared to India and Bangladesh. This is in the domain of the Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Figure 4). Since 2000, Pakistan has had a significantly lower HDI and a smaller growth rate in the Index. Analysis of the components of the HDI reveals that the relatively low index value is the largest in education, measured by the literacy rate and the years completed of education by the adult population. The basic reason is that given a large hostile neighbour, Pakistan has had to divert more public resources away from education and health to defence spending.

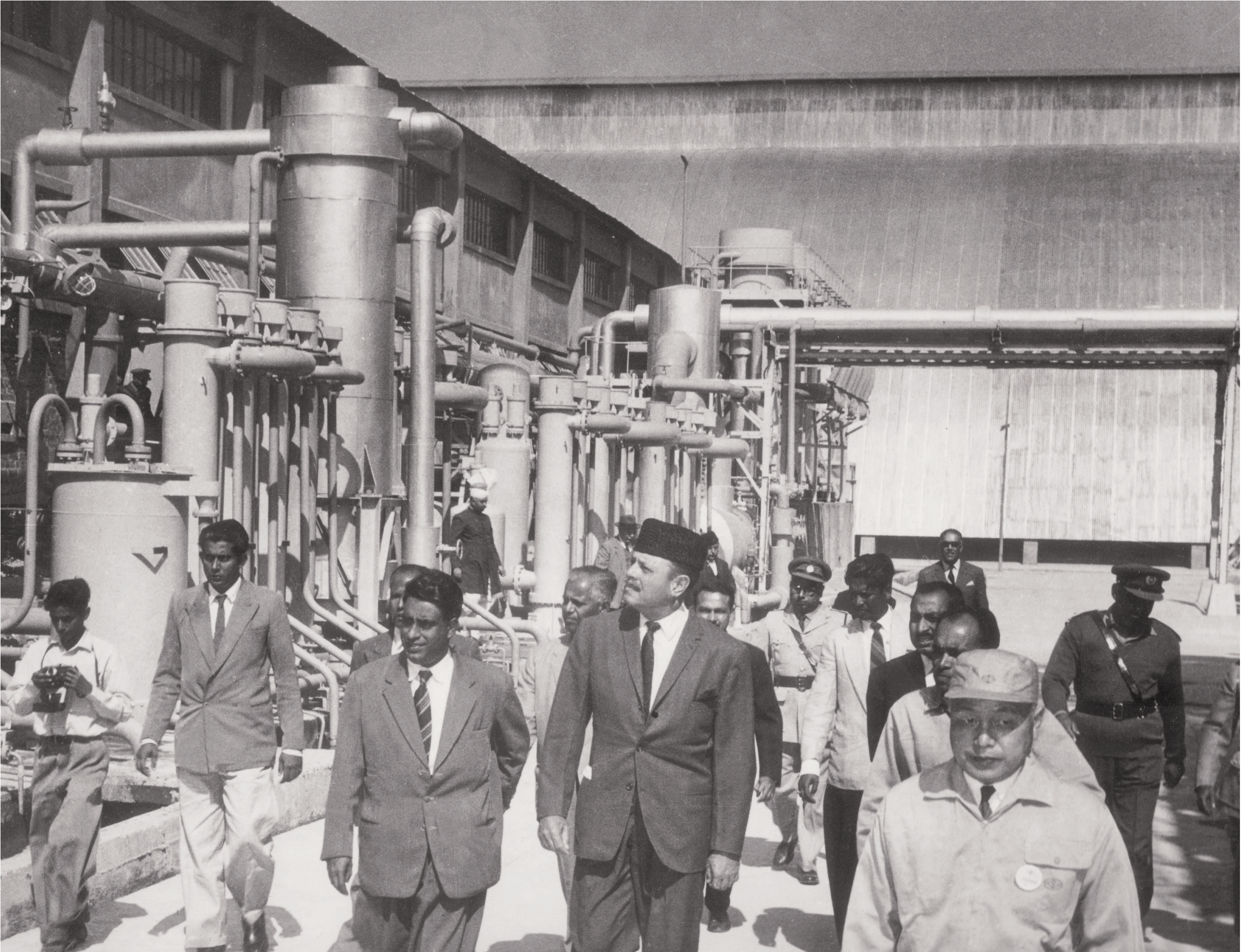
However, Pakistan has a better ranking than Bangladesh in the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International (TI) and a higher ranking than both Bangladesh and India in the Environment Protection Index of Yale University. In the light of the foregoing, there is need to highlight that since independence Pakistan has performed well in the first four decades compared to India and in the 1970s and the 1980s in relation to Bangladesh. However, the economic performance slowed down and weakened from the 1990s onwards, but even now Pakistan has a lower incidence of unemployment and poverty than the other two countries in the subcontinent.

It is unfortunate that in its 75th year, Pakistan is facing an incipient financial crisis. There is need of a firm resolve to improve the economic situation and to strive hard to reach upper-middle income status as a country by the centenary in 2047.

The author is professor emeritus at the Beaconhouse National University. He has been a former UN assistant secretary-general and a federal minister.

HIGH TIME TO LIVE IN THE MODERN WORLD

A once thriving industrial sector was thrown off track by Bhutto's nationalisation policies. DR ISHRAT HUSSAIN asserts that only a higher productivity, investment in 'sunrise' and high-tech ventures, and a better-trained labour force can fuel economic growth in Pakistan.



The building of the Tarbela and Mangla Dams as a consequence of the Indus Waters Basin Treaty spurred the importation of high technology units to allow the functioning of the massive water cum power infrastructure projects in the Ayub Khan era. Here President Ayub is seen inspecting one such project with officials. (Courtesy: PID Islamabad)

At the time of independence, Pakistan had no industry worth its name and therefore the corporate sector, even in its rudimentary form, was non-existent. The government, therefore, had to play a catalytic role in nurturing the development of the private sector by pursuing policies that protected the newcomers from international competition.

This led to the emergence of a dynamic and vibrant private sector which became the engine of growth. Very few people realise that from almost scratch, Pakistan's manufactured exports, according to the World Bank, were by 1969 higher than those of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. This was by no means a mean feat and the country should have taken pride in this exceptional performance that was registered within two decades. But the process was disrupted because of some unintended consequences that had adverse political implications.

The slogan of '22 families' owning the majority of industrial assets and the location of most industrial units in West Pakistan gave rise to a tumultuous reaction in the country. The socialist paradigm that was very much a critical factor in Cold War days mingled with the political movement against military dictator Ayub Khan. After the separation of East Pakistan and the election of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, charismatic leader who came to office on the promise of breaking up the concentration of economic power, the country suffered a severe setback.

Large-scale industries, banks, insurance companies, educational institutions were all nationalised. They were run by bureaucrats who had no experience of running a business enterprise. The decision-making that has to be swift in case of business was too concentrated in the ministry of production and the boards of management. The country detracted from its trajectory of rapid economic growth.

DAMAGE CONTROL

The damage was not controlled until Nawaz Sharif came to power and introduced privatisation, liberalisation and deregulation as the pillars of an extensive economic reform agenda. Although subsequent governments did not reverse the agenda, due to the dictates of political survival, they did not implement it as vigorously and diligently as it ought to have been done. The country muddled through and from being one of the fastest growing developing countries in the first 40 years of its existence, it has become a laggard in the region, and India and Bangladesh, who were way behind in all indicators, have surpassed us.

It is no use lamenting the past, but the need is to design and deliver policies that would lead to the revival of our economy as quickly as possible. Let us begin by asserting that there is plenty of empirical evidence over the last seven decades from development literature that the binary — markets vs government — is no longer valid and has become outdated. We need both a strong and effective government

and well-functioning competitive markets regulated by the government. The public and private sectors should work in partnership for common agreed goals, each where they have comparative advantage.

There are both market failures and government failures and as long as these failures get redressed, the country would be moving on the right track. Global financial crises, pandemics, inequality, technological advances and the climate change agenda have convinced us that timely and appropriate government interventions are required to address these issues. On the other hand, the government should keep its hands off when it comes running businesses as experience with the public sector running business enterprises has not been very successful in many countries.

HIGHER DEMAND, HIGHER IMPORTS

It has become quite clear that the domestic productive capacity to meet the aggregate demand when the country is growing fast is inadequate and creates balance of payments problem as the demand spills over into higher imports. In turn, we have to borrow in order to finance these imports as our foreign exchange earnings from exports, remittances and foreign direct investments (FDIs) are not sufficient to meet the rising import bill. The consequences of this boom-and-bust economy is that we have to meet periodic crises, approach the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other donors to meet our external financing requirements.

To avoid depletion of our foreign exchange reserves, we have to allow the exchange rate to depreciate, interest rate to rise to contain inflationary pressures, and allocate a higher amount of our budgetary revenues to meet debt-servicing costs. The rising fiscal deficits continue to reduce the space for public-sector investment.

Under this scenario, the private sector has the obligation to raise investment rates by expanding production for domestic and international markets. Agriculture input supply, marketing and processing have remained stuck in medieval modes and the private sector has not established warehouses, cold chains, agro-processing units, certified quality seed companies, advisory services, veterinary services, artificial dissemination units, equipment and implements rental shops to increase domestic production of cotton, wheat, sugarcane, powdered milk, pulses, vegetables and fruit, oilseeds, fodder, etc. that can save at least \$10 billion of imports every year.

Similarly, in industrial and services sectors the realistic exchange rate and concessional financing under temporary economic refinance facility (TERF) has opened opportunities for efficient import substitution and backward linkages in automobile, mobile manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, electronics etc. Information Technology (IT) and IT-enabled services have emerged in recent years as a promising avenue for both domestic digitalisation agenda as well as for exports. Investment in innovation and

technology should be undertaken by our well-established businesses rather than following the herd instinct. Petrochemicals, oil refineries and steel are the most critical industries for investment which we have neglected for decades.

SHARE IN EXPORTS

Most successful countries have benefitted from active participation in international trade as world exports have been growing twice as fast as the global output. Our share in global export markets has declined from 0.2pc to 0.15pc in the last 30 years, and export-GDP ratio plummeted to 10pc from over 17pc in 1992. India was able to jump from 7pc to 23pc by 2013, and Bangladesh from 6pc to 19pc. Both these countries were able to significantly surpass Pakistan in capturing the share in global exports (India 1.71pc and Bangladesh 0.24pc).

Global economic conditions in this period, except for the crisis of 2008, were buoyant and highly favourable to developing countries, and their share had risen faster at the expense of the developed countries. At the turn of the millennium, 90-97pc of merchandise exports used to finance Pakistan's imports, but this capacity has dwindled to only 47pc. Not only has export growth levelled off, the composition of our exports has also remained unchanged for the last three decades.

Two-thirds of our exports are concentrated in a few agricultural raw materials-based and unskilled and semi-skilled labour-intensive products, such as textiles, rice, leather, etc. We remain focussed on traditional, stagnant, slow-moving sunset exports rather than dynamic, fast-growing strategic products in the medium-tech and hi-tech sectors. The share in hi-tech exports has remained static at less than 2pc while low-tech exports account for two-thirds of the total, down from one-half in the 1980s.

The public discourse so far has been mainly and disproportionately centred around the government's role in export promotion and very little attention has been paid to those 'who produce, distribute and sell these products' — the main private-sector actors in the scene for making our exports competitive. The captains of industry in the export sector should no longer devote their attention towards Islamabad for extracting concessions, tax breaks, subsidies and low interest rates, as this would keep them dependent on the crutches provided by the government of the day and keep them entrapped in the present low-productivity equilibrium.

They should tap the hidden wealth in industry through labour productivity gains by hiring professionals, restructuring internal organisation, revamping logistics, acquisition methods, entering into joint ventures and bringing in FDI, and mobilising capital for expansion and investment in sunrise industries through initial public offerings (IPOs).

The most persistent and lingering phenomenon that needs to be tackled is low productivity in our export industries, which is amongst the lowest in the

region. We may be a low-wage country, but, adjusted for productivity, efficiency, quality (rejection rate), reliability and innovation (design), we are an expensive country. A labour force with average schooling of five years and 40pc of the population being illiterate place Pakistan at a disadvantage compared to its competitors. It therefore becomes imperative for the exporting firms and the government together to turn this around and not accept the situation as a given.

The present practice of considering wages paid to labour as a financial burden, hiring transient, temporary and contractual workers, non-allocation of resources for training and skill-formation and upgradation only aggravates the problems. Many firms have done remarkably well in treating their workers fairly, training and upskilling them and taking care of their welfare. The attrition rates in these firms are low, morale is high and loyalty to the employer unshakable. The owners of these firms have reaped the dividends and are continuing to do so at a heightened level.

Finally, there is tremendous political and business lobbyist pressure to protect domestic final goods industries by imposing high tariffs. Very few economists would disagree that the 'infant industry' argument and 'learning-by-doing' justify time-bound performance-related protection. However, in Pakistan we have become used to open-ended and continuous extension of concessions, exemptions and high tariff rates. Entry and exit rates of firms exporting their goods and services are therefore low, product diversification has actually shrunk, sectoral composition remains unchanged from the 1990s, and geographical concentration is elevated.

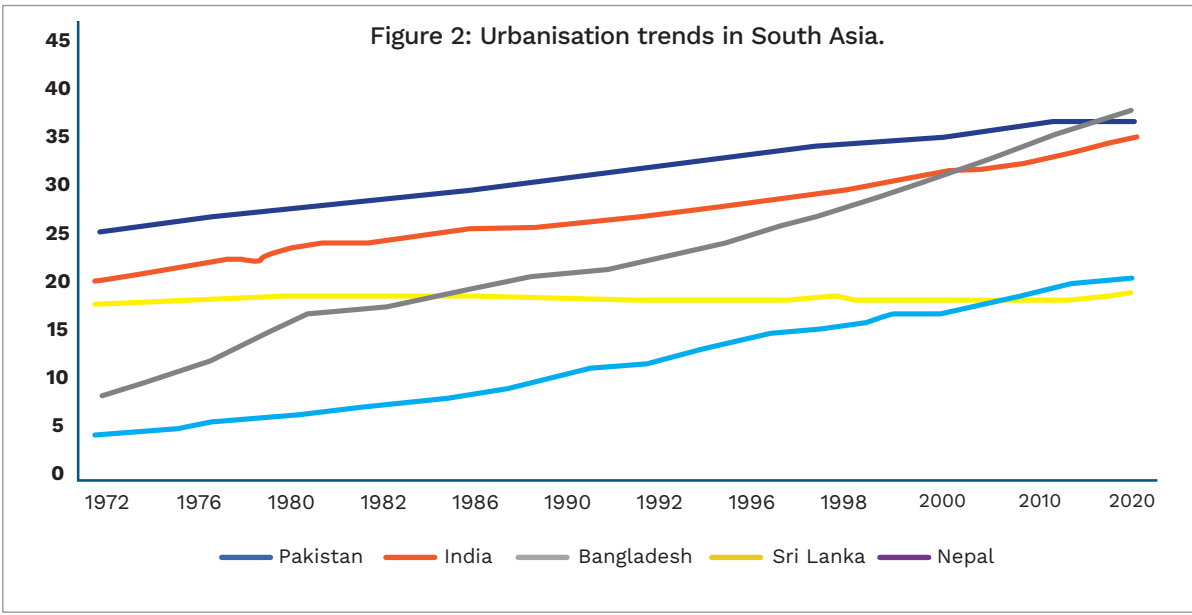
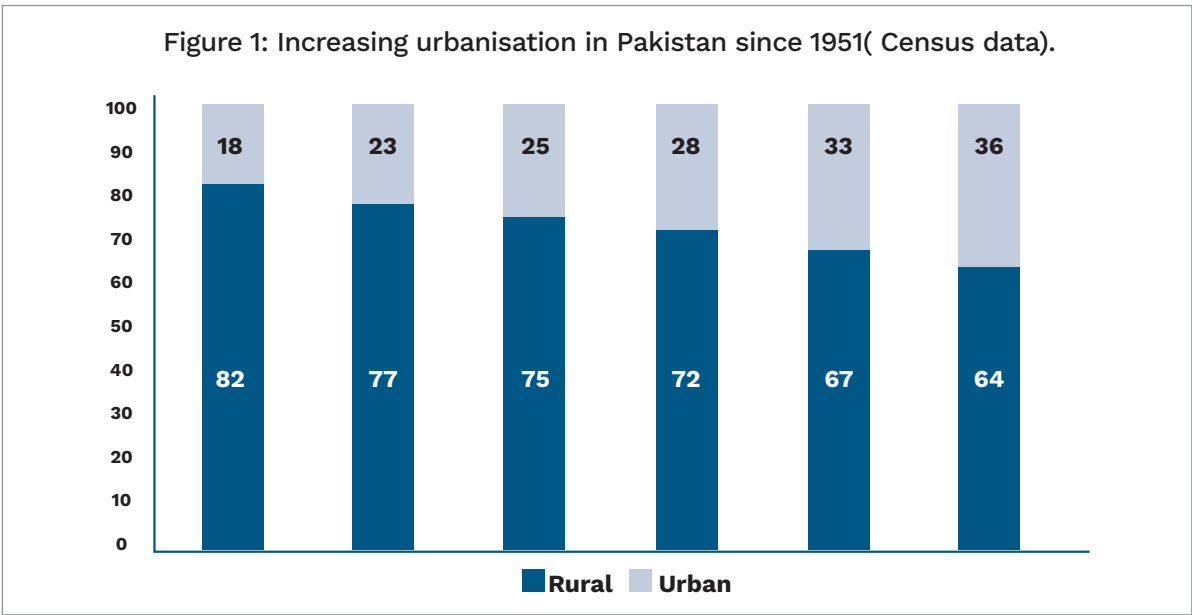
The latest estimates of effective rates of protection (ERP) are not available, but an earlier study by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) had concluded that these rates had declined in the early 2000s. But the introduction of additional custom duty and regulatory duty in the last five years has increased the ERPs. Average tariff rates and the number of tariff lines were also rationalised, except for a few items, but these have also been tampered with in the last decade with the average rate rising from 12pc in FY15 to almost 20pc in FY20, which is almost twice as much as is the case with our competitors, and in China it is 5pc.

It is not realised that in a world dominated by global value chains, tariffs on imports of components, ancillary supplies and intermediate inputs act as tax on exports. Studies have found that reduction in import duties help minimise input costs in downstream industries, some of whom then become competitive in third-country markets. Let's start living in the 21st century.

The writer carried out extensive institutional reforms as SBP Governor and IBA Director. He chaired the National Commission for Government Reforms (NCGR) in 2006-08 that produced a comprehensive plan for civil service reform and restructuring of the federal, provincial and local governments. In 2009-10 he was head of the Pay and Pension Commission, and from 2018 to 2021 adviser to the prime minister on institutional reforms and austerity.

OUR CITIES UNFIT TO ABSORB MIGRANTS

DR NAVEED HAMID & HIJAB WAHEED argue that although Pakistan’s urban population has spiralled, governments have failed to address the civic problems stemming from rapid urbanisation. An independent local government system is the only way forward.



RURAL-urban migration and urbanisation are two sides of the same coin. The urban share of population in Pakistan more than doubled between 1951 and 2017; the years between the first and the most recent census (Figure 1). The rate of natural increase in urban areas in Pakistan was less than in rural areas and, therefore, increasing urbanisation was because of rural-urban migration.

Between 1998 and 2017, the years of the two most recent censuses, urban population increased by about 33 million and, based on the rates of natural increase in urban and rural areas, it is estimated that about 44pc of this increase was because of rural-urban migration. In other words, 14.5 million people migrated from rural to urban areas during this period; about 750,000 persons per year.

The census understates the level of urbanisation in most developing countries, primarily because the urban population in the census is for areas that are ‘administratively classified’ as urban, and the efficiency of local governments in reclassifying rural areas as urban is generally poor and varies across provinces.

The most glaring example in the 2017 census is that of Karachi. It seems to have grown on average by only 2.4pc per annum between 1998 and 2017, which is less than the average national population growth rate. If Karachi had grown at Pakistan’s average urban population growth rate of 4.4pc, its population in 2017 would be around 21 million.

In addition, ribbons of development along the highways in densely populated districts have been transforming the country’s landscape. For example, as you drive out of Lahore or any other major city, you see construction — including shopping malls, marriage halls, banks, hotels and restaurants — along the roadside for many miles. While these strips are not ‘administratively classified’ as urban, people living in them have access to health and education facilities, commerce and occupations similar to those in an urban area.

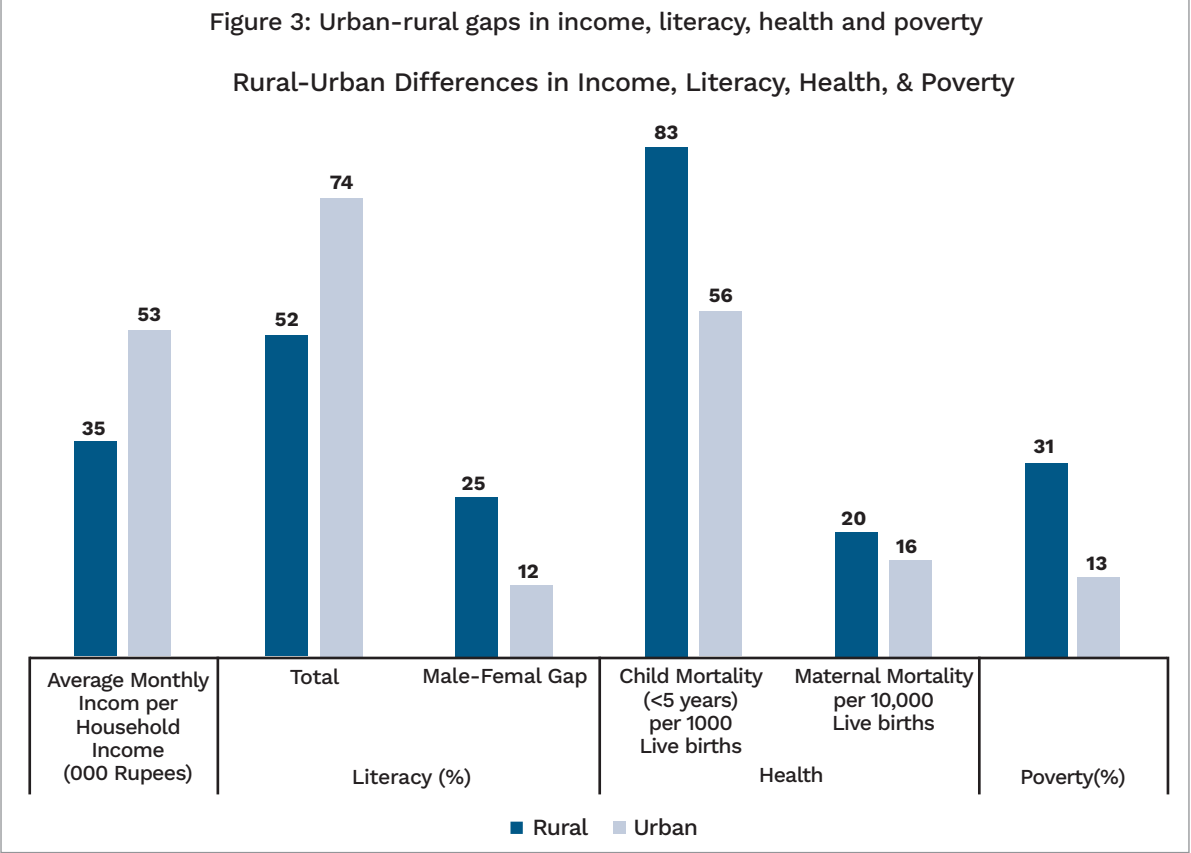
DEVELOPMENT AND URBANISATION

In developed countries, the share of urban population has increased continuously for more than 300 years. At the beginning of the 18th century, urbanisation in Britain and western Europe was around 10pc, and by end of the 20th century it was 70-80pc in most developed countries.

South Asian countries are experiencing a similar process of urbanisation during the last 50 years (Figure 2). Bangladesh has had the fastest rate of urbanisation, while the pace of urbanisation in Pakistan and India remained similar until 1998, when the latter started urbanising at a faster rate. The rate of urbanisation in different countries and periods seems to be in line with the pace of economic growth in each country during that period, with Pakistan lagging behind on both counts.

REASONS FOR INTERNAL MIGRATION

An individual’s decision to migrate is motivated by pull and push factors. Higher incomes and better prospects in terms of access to health, education, infrastructure and jobs in urban areas — i.e. pull factors — are the main drivers of internal migration. The urban-rural gaps in income and social indicators are a measure of the pull factors, which are large in Pakistan.



For example, in urban areas, on average, income and literacy rates are 40-50pc higher and the gender gap in literacy, child and maternal mortality and poverty is 20-60pc lower than in rural areas (Figure 3). People in urban areas also attain significantly higher levels of education. Those in appropriate age groups having 12-years-or-more and 10-years-or-more education in urban areas is 75-120pc higher, and those who never attended school is 50pc lower than in rural areas (Figure 4).

Patterns of urbanisation differ across the four provinces. Sindh was the most urbanised province in 1951 as it is today, with more than half the population residing in urban areas in 2017 (Figure 5). It seems that the rate of urbanisation in Sindh slowed considerably post-1998, but this is probably because of the underestimation of Karachi’s population and, adjusted for that, Sindh’s urbanisation rate is only slightly less than Punjab.

The rate of urbanisation has been most rapid in Balochistan, followed by Punjab, with the share of urban population in each province more than doubling during this period. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) had the slowest rate of urbanisation in the country in 2017. This is probably because of a combination of lack of industrial development and the readiness of the people to look for jobs and business opportunities outside the province.

The pattern of urbanisation in Sindh is unique, as one city, Karachi, dominates the urban landscape, with over 60pc (or 68pc, if adjusted for underestimation) of the urban population. In Punjab, Balochistan and KP, the urban population is much more evenly distributed with the largest city in each province, i.e. Lahore, Quetta and Peshawar, accounting for 27pc, 29pc and 34pc of the urban population of that province, respectively.

In Punjab, the next four largest cities (all with over a million population) account for 23pc of the urban popu-

lation of that province, while the corresponding value in Balochistan and KP is about 20pc. Thus, in all the three provinces, about half of the urban population lives in medium and small cities.

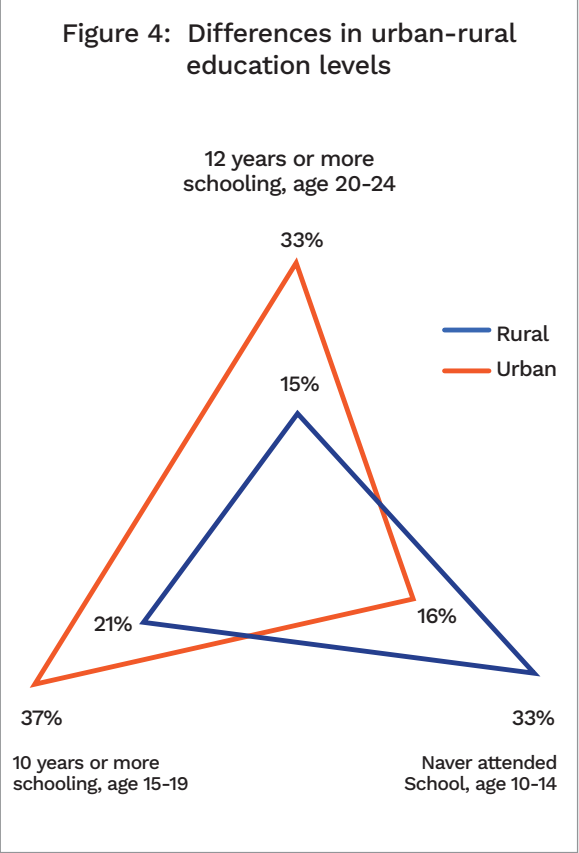
INTER-PROVINCIAL AND EXTERNAL

Rural-urban migration within the province has been highest in Punjab (6pc), followed by KP (4pc), Sindh (3pc) and Balochistan (2pc). Inter-provincial migration in Pakistan has been quite limited: only 2.3pc of the population in Sindh, 1.5pc each in Punjab and Balochistan, and less than 0.5pc in KP were born in a different province.

Among the major cities, Islamabad has the largest proportion of migrants (36pc), followed by Lahore (15pc), while Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar are all about 12pc (Figure 6). However, almost 90pc of Lahore’s migrants came from within the province, while Karachi and Quetta attracted migrants from across the country, with 45-55pc of the migrants coming from a different province.

Pakistan has about nine million emigrants settled around the world and there are major differences in the provincial pattern of emigration. The proportion of the emigrants from Punjab is about the same as its share in the population, but the proportion of emigrants from KP is about two-and-a-half times its population share, while for Sindh it is less than half its population share (Figure 7). The high emigration rate in KP is probably because of the lack of decent employment opportunities within the province and historical tradition of long-distance migration.

It is estimated that 14.5 million people migrated from rural to urban areas within Pakistan during between 1998 and 2017, and, if we assume that two-third of the



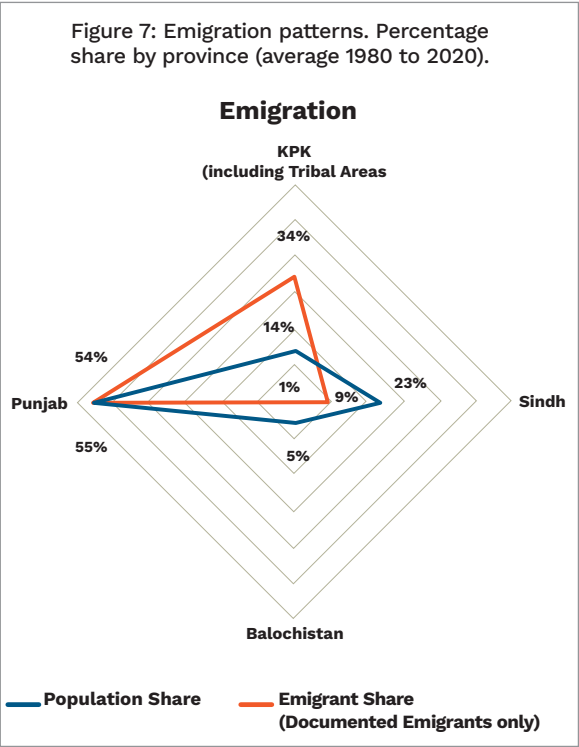
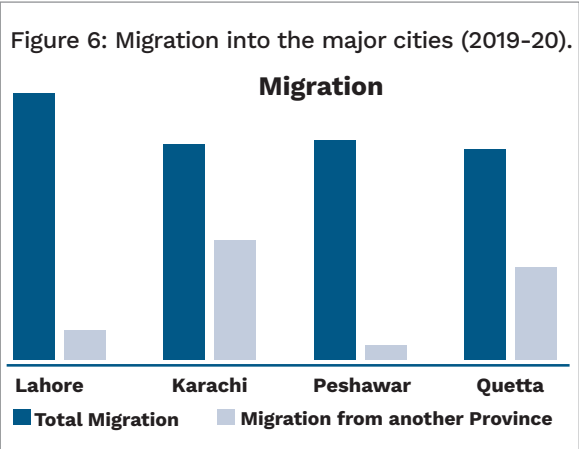
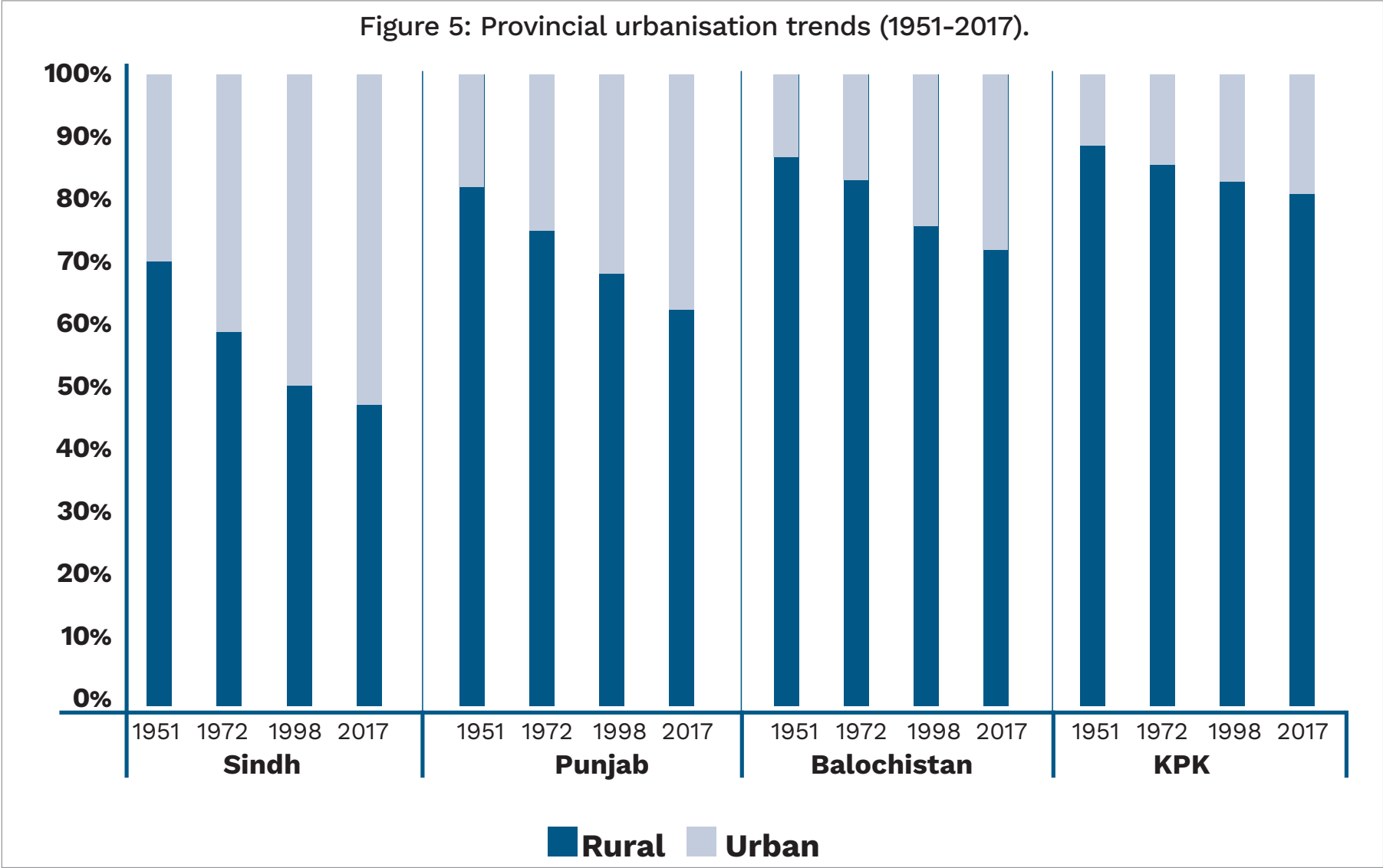
people who reside outside Pakistan emigrated during the same period, we can conclude that over 20 million people migrated during that period. Of these, 70pc migrated within the country and 30pc moved abroad. Thus, if it were not for external migration, urbanisation in Pakistan today would have been much higher, particularly in KP.

The share of urban population in Pakistan has more than doubled in the last 75 years and it is likely to at least double again by the end of this century. Rural-urban migration could accelerate in the coming years because the impact of global warming on water availability and agriculture production will push those in the worst affected communities to migrate to the cities.

However, urbanisation can be good because, by concentrating population and economic activity in a geographical area, it yields benefits in terms of increased productivity and higher standards of living. But to realise these benefits fully, it is important to address the problems associated with urbanisation. So far, Pakistan has failed to do so.

Most of our cities have poor basic urban services, such as clean water supply, sewerage system, solid waste management and public transport. In addition, our cities suffer from urban sprawl, traffic congestion, air pollution and a lack of low-cost housing. To make our cities more liveable and become engines of growth, we need to empower local governments and make them financially independent and accountable to their residents.

Dr. Naved Hamid is director CREB and a professor at the Lahore School of Economics. Ms Hijab Waheed is a teaching and research fellow at Lahore School of Economics.



REMODELLING THE RED-TAPE BRIGADE

Transforming an antiquated and complacent bureaucracy into a force capable of excellence in service delivery will not be an easy task, argues DR ISHRAT HUSSAIN.



Photo: Dawn Archives

On left, Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Chairman WAPDA — a civil servant who would rise in the later years of the century to become President of Pakistan — presents a small replica of the Hyderabad Thermal Power Station to President Ayub Khan on October 9, 1961. (Courtesy: Ayub Khan Archives/ Tahir Ayub). On right, President Ghulam Ishaq swears in Benazir Bhutto as the first woman Prime Minister of Pakistan on December 2, 1988 at the Presidency in Islamabad.

GOOD governance is closely linked with sustainable and equitable development. However good the policies may be, they will have little positive impact unless the institutions implementing them are effective and efficient. One of the main institutions required for good governance is a competent, neutral and honest bureaucracy.

For ordinary citizens, it is civil servants who are most germane to their daily lives. Pakistan was fortunate to have inherited a steel frame for its bureaucracy from the British. Initially, the civil services remained true to their tradition and were governed by the hallmarks that had distinguished the Indian Civil Service (ICS), like constitutional protection, political neutrality, permanency, security of tenure, anonymity, recruitment based on open competition and merit, and rigorous post-induction training.

In the period following independence, the civil servants focussed on their routine functions of maintaining law and order and collecting land revenue, but also provided stewardship in rehabilitating eight million refugees, laying the foundation of the new government structure and building institutions from scratch, such as the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the office of the Auditor-General of Pakistan, the Planning Commission, the Central Board of Revenue, etc.

However, with the passage of time, the requirements of a newly independent country went beyond the narrow set of functions their predecessors in ICS used to perform. Pakistan's civil services system and processes did not adapt to changed circumstances. Their attitudes towards the citizens of an independent country whom they were purported to serve remained ingrained in paternalism and the *Mai-Baap* culture of the past. The bureaucrats remained frozen in time and were unresponsive to the people's needs and aspirations. This status quo suited the military government that came to power in 1958 and the coalition of military-civil services ruled the country until 1971 to the exclusion of the political leadership.

BREAKING THE FRAME

The post-1971 era ushered in a popularly elected government that decided to break the frame of the civil services and make the bureaucrats more pliable and flexible. The first hallmark of constitutional protection responsible for the civil servants' independence and neutrality was withdrawn. The quasi-monopoly of the Civil Services of Pakistan (CSP) in appointments and allocation of top positions was demolished. All different cadres were brought on par and unified under a common pay scale, recruitment and training. Compression ratio (the salary of highest grade to the salary of lowest grade) was drastically cut down, to the great disadvantage of the officers' cadre.

These reforms did not address the larger question of the delivery of public services to the population at large. Except for a couple of thousand officers recruited by the Central Superior Services (CSS), the majority of civil servants remained confined to ex-cadre or non-cadre jobs. Several thousand doctors, educationists, teachers, scientists, engineers, lawyers, financial analysts, economists and accountants in the public sector have limited opportunities for career progression.

The antiquated system of primary interaction between the state and the citizen taking place through low-paid, ill-equipped, poorly educated, rude functionaries, such as the *patwari*, the *thanedar* and the sub-divisional officer (SDO) enjoying enormous discretionary powers remained entrenched along with rampant corruption, inefficiency and poor governance.

This bottom-heavy lopsided structure, where unskilled and semi-skilled employees occupy 95pc of the strength of the federal and provincial governments and consume 85pc of the total salary bill, has been a major factor in poor compensation and benefits given to the managerial and technical experts working for the government.

The resultant demotivation, demoralisation and despondency among the majority of civil servants is re-

Bureaucratic performance is also affected by outdated, outmoded rules and procedures, elongated hierarchy, absence of automation and computerisation, ineffective incentive systems that do not appreciate outstanding civil servants, but equally reward the incompetent and corrupt. A more recent and harmful tendency that has emerged is obsessive control exercised by the higher offices in the land where all powers have been centralised and concentrated.

flected in poor service delivery. Indifference, inaction and apathy towards clients and a mindset resisting change has become ingrained in their behaviour.

The 2001 devolution of power to local governments had abolished the post of deputy commissioner (DC) who formed the single-point anchor for both citizens and government leaders. Along with the superintendent of police (SP), the played a crucial role in enforcing the state's writ at the district level.

The new system of elected nazim as the head of the local government that replaced the old one was still being tested and tried and there were many ambiguities, lack of clarity and operational difficulties that needed to be addressed. But before this system could grow roots, it was dismantled in 2008. The vacuum thus created by abolishing the 2001 system strengthened non-state actors, various mafias, criminals and extortionists. Development projects that had picked up speed because of the ownership and leadership of the district nazims also fell into a state of disarray.

LOYALTY OVER COMPETENCE

The second hallmark of political neutrality was shattered in the 1990s when due to job insecurity and to gain prized postings and perks as well as out-of-turn promotions, the civil servants started to align themselves with political parties. Successive governments brought in their favourite civil servants to occupy key positions. Loyalty rather than competence became the acid test for survival. The winners in this game included political leaders and acquiescent civil servants, while the losers were ordinary citizens who ceased to have access to the government and had no way of having their grievances redressed.

The third and fourth hallmarks of permanency and security of tenure where the changes in political regimes did not affect the tenures of the higher-level civil servants were also cast aside. The permanent civil servant used to furnish to the administration

the indispensable element of continuity, institutional memory and expert knowledge. Frequent transfers to positions unrelated to their academic background or relevant experience led to widespread propagation of incompetence and lack of expertise.

A system that recruited some of the very best talent and then allowed them to be improperly used in outdated management practices soaked in patronage and corruption resulted in three kinds of responses. First, the best and the brightest, seeing the conditions of service and practices decided not to appear in the competitive CSS examinations, thus impairing the quality of new intakes. Another hallmark of an efficient civil service thus disappeared.

Second, honest and competent serving officers become frustrated, their job satisfaction is low and either they exit the service or get themselves posted to less-conspicuous or innocuous positions, lowering the quality of decision-making at key posts.

Third, the survivors adjust to the new rules of the game and lower their standards of honesty and engage in immoral administrative politics in order to continue to secure their own interests, caring two hoots for service delivery or public welfare. They do suffer temporarily when the political party to whom they owe allegiance gets displaced, and wait till the party is back in power.

OUTDATED, INEFFECTIVE SYSTEM

Bureaucratic performance is also affected by outdated, outmoded rules and procedures, elongated hierarchy, absence of automation and computerisation, ineffective incentive systems that do not appreciate outstanding civil servants, but equally reward the incompetent and corrupt. A more recent but harmful tendency that has emerged is obsessive control exercised by the offices of the prime minister and the chief ministers where all powers have been centralised and concentrated.

Lack of trust in senior secretaries, second-guessing their judgment calls, looking for pliable and gullible civil servants who would toe their line deprive the rendering of objective and unbiased advice. Those

who do not toe the line are shown the door. As a direct consequence, merit and experience are disregarded and wrong people are placed in key jobs.

THE WAY FORWARD

What is the way forward? A number of reports of task forces and commissions have been prepared and are ready for implementation. The most recent ones are the report of the National Commission for Government Reforms (NCGR) and the report on institutional reforms. Three key reforms proposed in these reports are flagged below.

The present mode of the superior civil services that attracts young men and women through an open competitive examination who then spend 30-35 years serving the government had worked reasonably well in the first few decades after independence. The challenges of the 21st century for public service have become more complex. Therefore, this model of assured career path on the basis of an entry examination at a young age is no longer applicable or sustainable any longer.

A new hybrid model that nurtures, promotes and draws upon the expertise and domain knowledge and combines it with broad-based experience, leadership traits and the ability to synthesise different perspectives and policy inputs needs to be considered as the way forward. Leadership traits are not exclusively located within any one group but can be found across the groups too.

Many countries across the world have employed the model of what is generally referred to as Senior Public Service (SPS). Countries, including Britain, Japan, South Korea and Singapore and others, have their own versions of senior public services distinct from each other in regard to the degree of openness the system offers.

A similar system of National Executive Service (NES) without any reservations for any cadre or group open to all eligible and qualified candidates should be instituted in Pakistan without any entitlements or reservations for any cadre or service group. Recruitment should be made by the Federal Public Service Commission on the basis of merit through a competitive process.

All senior policymaking positions should be filled by members of the NES and given security of tenure and enter into annual performance agreements. NES should be divided into four clusters: General management; Economic sectors; Social sectors; and Technical sectors. Career progression should take place within each of the specialised clusters.

Next is the automation and compensation of civil servants. The switchover from manual to automated processes and the government's commitment to move towards e-governance should require a look at the skill mix and training requirements of the existing and future civil servants throughout the entire hierarchy. The whole system will itself flatten the hierarchical texture and make apparent the redundancies in the system. At the same time, it will involve basic computer literacy at all levels and grades, digital archiving, storage and retrieval of all files and documents. Consequently, only a few of the clerical and subordinate staff positions can be utilised in the future government organisation. Savings through attrition of surplus staff should be adequate to pay higher compensation packages to the officers who form the backbone of the institution.

Finally, the salary increments, promotions and choice postings should be linked to performance, rewarding the outstanding and excellent performers at the expense of the lethargic and inefficient ones. Non-performers and those with consistently poor service record should be compulsorily retired after a certain length of time.

The writer carried out extensive institutional reforms as SBP Governor and IBA Director. He chaired the National Commission for Government Reforms (NCGR) in 2006-08 that produced a comprehensive plan for civil service reform and restructuring of the federal, provincial and local governments. In 2009-10 he was head of the Pay and Pension Commission, and from 2018 to 2021 adviser to the prime minister on institutional reforms and austerity.

NO PROSPECTS WITHOUT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Will the economy grow in the absence of adequate allocations for health and education? Should we allow the ruling elite to indulge in their preference for short-term financial gains at the cost of social development, asks FAISAL BARI.

THOUGH 75 years may not be a long time in the life of a nation-state, it is definitely long enough to have a major impact on structures, institutions and outcomes within the nation-state. We have plenty of examples around us that show this. The story of the so-called East Asian Tigers is a truly impressive example. After World War II, the Tigers changed themselves completely in a matter of decades.

China continues to change at an astounding pace. It is now the second-largest economy in the world and may soon be the largest. In our neighbourhood, India has been showing remarkable development since the mid-1980s. More recently, Bangladesh has made strong progress in a matter of decades. It is, therefore, a good time to look at what we have been able to achieve, where we stand today and what the road ahead looks like. As part of such an effort, here below are snapshots from two important areas of the country’s social sector.

EDUCATION

The education section of the executive summary of the *Economic Survey of Pakistan 2021-22* notes: “Pakistan is committed to transforming its education system into a high-quality global-market demand-driven system in accordance with Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” However, the reality is vastly different. The literacy rate in Pakistan in 2021 was only 62.8pc. Any gains in literacy rates over the last many years have been small, slow and marginal.

Though Article 25A of the Constitution, added as part of the 18th Amendment, says that all those age 5-16 years should have access to free and compulsory education, an estimated 20 million children remain out of school. We have not even achieved universal enrolment and completion at the primary level. The primary level Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) is currently 84pc, down from 91pc in 2014-15. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER), which tracks enrolment rates of the relevant age cohort at the primary level, is only 64pc, down from 67pc in 2014-15.

Most children who enrol in grade one drop out before they finish higher secondary level of education. It is estimated that of every 100 children who join grade one, only about seven are able to enrol for undergraduate studies 12 or so years later. Dropouts are for a variety of reasons. One amongst them is the non-availability of schools at the higher level. We have, across Pakistan, some 283,700 educational institutions. Out of these, 187,900 are primary schools, 49,300 middle schools, 32,300 high schools, and only 6,200 higher secondary schools.

Not every child of primary school-going age is getting enrolled in school. Even for those who are enrolled in the 187,900 primary schools, there are only 49,300 schools at the middle school level. When children graduate from primary to middle schools, many have to change schools. Since we have fewer middle schools, the distance to school for many children increases even if these middle schools have the space to accommodate all of the children coming from primary schools. Research points out that distance to school is another strong factor explaining dropout rates.

The connection between distance to school and school attendance is much stronger for girls than boys. Primary to middle school transition also happens around the time when girls hit puberty (children, especially in rural areas, enrol in schools one-three years after when they should be in school). Questions of security and ‘honour’ become important here. It is no surprise then that a lot of children drop out when they are forced to transition from primary to middle schools. The same dynamics get repeated as children transition from middle to high and then to higher secondary schools. One could, therefore, say that dropouts are due to ‘policy design’. When we do not have the required number of schools in close proximity to students and do not have any provision of transportation for children who live at a distance from a school, how can dropout be avoided?

We have not touched upon issues of quality of education yet. However, it is as big an issue as access, if not bigger. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) gives a cross-sectional picture of learning outcomes of Pakistani children at the basic numeracy and literacy skill level almost every year. These reports, over the last many years, have been showing poor levels of learning for a majority of children, and no major improvement trends. In fact, the latest report shows some level of learning loss as well due to the disruption caused by the Covid pandemic.

ASER shows that almost half of the children enrolled in grade five in Pakistan are behind in learning terms than where they should be at that stage. Education sector researchers have been saying that there is a ‘learning crisis’ in many developing countries where children might be going to schools, but they are not learning what they should be learning and not at the pace at which learning should be happening.

The World Bank has even worked out quality-adjusted ‘years of schooling’ indices. Pakistan does quite poorly on them. Here, if a child is in school for eight odd years, their quality-adjusted learning level amounts to only four or 4.5 years. It may be hard for us to get all our children into school, but it is a tragedy that even those fortunate enough to attend are not learning as they should be.

In 2021-22, we spent only 1.77pc of GDP on education-related expenditure at both the federal and provincial levels. Most UN agencies recommend that the minimum expenditure on education should be 4pc of GDP. In recent years, the highest percentage of GDP we have spent on education was in 2017-18, when education expenditures were raised to 2.12pc. The usual argument given for lack of spending on education has always been and still is that we do not have the resources.

The lack-of-funds argument is a tricky one. Does Pakistan not have the money to be able to give every child an education of a certain quality, or is it the case that we have other priorities and the education of our children is not a high enough priority? Many countries do provide education to all of their children, and in most places, education, at least till high school, is state-funded and usually state-provided. Why has this been hard to do in Pakistan?

When examples of other countries are cited, it is often mentioned that developed countries have a lot more resources and can afford to spend a lot more on education, and it is difficult for developing societies to be able to prioritise educational provision. However, it should be kept in mind that it is not just the developed countries that are managing to educate all of their children. Many developing countries are also spending more on education, health and social sectors than Pakistan. Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are examples from our own neighbourhood. Both have higher literacy rates, and both countries have made very impressive progress on the education front in the last few decades. Neither of these countries is much ‘richer’ than Pakistan. As mentioned, the issue is of prioritisation.

In addition, it should also be borne in mind that when the countries called ‘developed’ today started investing in education, they were not considered ‘developed’. They were, at that time, developing themselves and had resource constraints that probably were not much different from what many developing countries face today.

They still started investing more in educating and upskilling their citizens. We have plenty of evidence that their investments in education contributed to where they are today in terms of economic and social development. The issue remains: what priority do you want to give to education? It seems to be a pretty low one for Pakistan, and this has been consistent for a fairly long time now.

HEALTH

The story of health is not very different from education. SDG 3 is to ‘Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages’, and the government rhetoric has always been that the health sector is a high-priority



A school functioning in a graveyard in rural Sindh is a symbolic representation of the priority the State of Pakistan accords to human development.

sector. Yet the achievements of this sector leave a lot to be desired. With regard to SDG goals, “Pakistan is on track for 3 out of 14 indicators ...” says the *Economic Survey of Pakistan 2021-22*. “All other indicators are either moderately improving or stagnating.” Compared to education, Pakistan spends even less on health. Even in a Covid year, Pakistan spent only 1.2pc of GDP on health.

Larger hospitals are concentrated in the larger cities, as are better-quality private health providers. The quality of care provided at Basic Health Units (BHUs) is quite poor. One of the most telling comments on our ability to manage healthcare provision continues to be the fact that Pakistan is still one of the few countries, along with the likes of conflict-torn Afghanistan, that have not been able to eliminate the polio virus. This year, too, we have had multiple cases of polio. We cannot even organise to get every child inoculated against polio.

Health services are concentrated in cities and are more focussed on curative services than preventive ones. Curative medicine tends to be more expensive. There are many diseases that can be prevented if inoculation and/or vaccination is available; if people have awareness and knowledge about preventive measures; and if they have access to the right preventive technologies and/or interventions. But health services are organised around providing curative services.

To take one example, surveys clearly show that more young people would like to have access to better information and services on reproductive health issues, but they do not have that. Though the government claims that family planning is a priority area, and that managing fertility issues is important for the country if we are going to manage the demographic transition more effectively, the level of services offered to young people is quite poor, and the coverage is very patchy, incomplete and insufficient.

GENERALISATIONS

One can continue to quote facts and figures from other social sectors, but they usually tell the same story as that of the education and health sectors. William Easterly, in a 2001 paper titled, *The Political Economy of Growth Without Development: A Case Study of Pakistan*, made some pertinent points that encapsulate the dilemma we have, and so it is worth quoting in detail: “Pakistan is an intriguing paradox. It has a well-educated and entrepreneurial Diaspora who thrive as small business owners in industrial economies, skilled workers in the Gulf States, and as high officials in international organisations. The professional elite within Pakistan is at a similar level to those in the industrialised world. Pakistan benefited from \$58 billion of foreign development assistance ... adjustment loans from the IMF and the World Bank ... a lucrative Cold War alliance with the United States, and multiple government development programmes. Pakistan is the third largest recipient of official development assistance in the world over 1960-98 (India and Egypt are first and second). If it had invested all the official development assistance from 1960 to 1998 at a real rate of 6pc, it would have a stock of assets equal to \$239 billion in 1998, many times the current external debt.

“The World Bank alone provided \$20 billion in loans from 1952 to 1999 ... Pakistan is blessed with fertile cropland watered by rivers that flow down from the Himalayas; it inherited the world’s largest irrigation system from the British at independence. It has even had per capita growth – on average 2.2pc per year from 1950 to 1999. Pakistan’s tripling of its per capita income over this period, and the concomitant poverty reduction, was an important achievement while many low-income countries were stagnating. Pakistan’s PPP per capita income was higher than a third of the world’s countries by 1999.

“Yet, after all this, social indicators like infant mortality and female primary and secondary enrolment are among the worst in the world in Pakistan. Female literacy ranges from 41pc in urban Sindh to 3pc in rural [Khyber Pakhtunkhwa] and Balochistan, with a nationwide average of 29pc. Despite a major effort to increase services under a donor-supported eight-year campaign called the Social Action Programme, Pakistan is only spending \$2 per capita on health. In contrast, the government is able to find the money for big-ticket items, like nuclear weapons and the \$1.2 billion six-lane expressway between Lahore and Islamabad...”

Easterly’s argument that for its level of income and given the growth path it has had, Pakistan does poorly on development indicators is worth dwelling over a bit. The growth also has, since Easterly wrote the article, become a lot harder to sustain. We keep having cycles where an external or manufactured stimulus allows us to have a bit of growth recovery, but within a couple of years or less, the recovery becomes non-sustainable, and the fiscal and current account deficits force the entry of another stabilisation programme. So, we have moved into the era of little growth and little development where, clearly, the ambition is to be on the path of sustainable high growth with development.

The key here is to understand why Pakistan had ‘growth without development’. Now that the growth seems to have faltered as well, there is talk, all the time, of Pakistan defaulting and/or needing loans and handouts to avoid default. Is it the lack of investment in human capital that is holding Pakistan back? Is it the lack of strong institutions that guarantee property rights, rule of law, and make the environment predictable for economic activity to thrive that is making Pakistan falter in terms of growth and development? Probably both.

Acemoglu and Robinson in their important book, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (2013), made a case for institutions, arguing that institutions, just understood as ‘formal and informal rules of the game’, definitely play an important role in ensuring paths to growth and development. But one of the key questions still remains: why have some countries been able to develop the right institutional structures, and others, like Pakistan, have been struggling?

There is plenty of evidence on the importance of investments in human capital: the health of the nation, the education and skill levels of the people in a country and their general wellbeing and welfare are import-

ant instrumental variables for ensuring the country is able to develop at sustainable rates. Of course, these human capital variables are not just instrumental variables, they are also ways of judging the state of development of a country. They are the ends development works for. A lot of work of scholars like Amartya Sen has shown, both theoretically and empirically, that a country cannot be ‘developed’ if its human development indicators lag behind, and, equally importantly, it is hard to see how a country can develop if it does not invest in its human capital.

Again, the question is: why have some countries been able to find the right combination of policies for macroeconomic management, institution building and investments in human capital and social welfare and have been able to sustain these policies and, as a result, have developed rapidly in a matter of decades, while others have continued to struggle? Why has Pakistan not been able to find such a policy combination?

A number of researchers working on Pakistan have argued that the Pakistani elite have been in capture of the state, its resources and its policies for a long time. They are a small percentage of the Pakistani population, yet have made policies that have been extractive in nature and have benefited them at the cost of society at large. Institutions function to serve the interests of the elites. Investments in health, education and so on also favour a very small segment of society. These elites have been milking the country for their benefit and, irrespective of who has been in power, all of them have been playing the same game. Individual beneficiaries have been changing, but class interests have dominated overall policy making and policy outcomes.

These elites are mentioned in Easterly’s paper as well. Dr Ishrat Husain made the same argument in his 1999 book, *Pakistan: The Economy of an Elitist State*. Kazim Saeed made the same argument about the division between the elites and the rest, in his extensive and well-argued book *Dou Pakistan* (2020). Most recently, this is the argument that has been made, at the global level, by Stefan Dercon, in his book *Gambling on Development: Why Some Countries Win and Others Lose*.

Though there are variations in details, we know, roughly, the policies, if they are pursued for sustained periods, that can lead to sustained growth and development. Many countries have been able to transform themselves over just a period of decades following such policy combinations. These policies are context-specific, but they have significant overlaps: macroeconomic stability, reward for entrepreneurship and risk-taking, institution-building, rule of law, investments in health, education and welfare. But the key is the ability to sustain the policies till rewards start coming for all. Then the rewards themselves provide legitimacy for the policies.

Pakistan has not been able to create this policy combination and sustain it for long enough. Dercon argues that in some countries, the elites have been able to curb their greed for short-term gains and “gambled on development” by investing in a “development bargain” that allowed society to pursue policies for overall growth and development. As the benefits from this development bargain started to come through, these benefits themselves became the legitimising factor for the policies as well as the regimes in question. This allowed these countries to move to sustainable high growth and development paths.

Pakistani ‘elites’ have not been able to do that. Instead, they have had, in the past and to date, a preference for policies that give short-term gains to whosoever is in power. The ‘milking’ of the country for short-term benefits of the few has not allowed optimal investments to take place in any productive sector; it has not allowed human capital to develop and has also not allowed space for optimal development of institutions. It is not a surprise that Pakistan has had a period of ‘growth without development’, and now even that has become unsustainable. The chickens are truly coming home to roost.

Though it is hard to explain why the elites in some countries choose to gamble on development, while others do not or are not able to, one explanatory factor mentioned by a number of researchers, including Dercon, is that of a crisis. In some countries, crisis situations have led to re-evaluation of policies and a move towards more inclusive policies.

China, in 1979 and after, is often given as an example. Though Pakistan has had its share of crises, it has not led to a change in the equilibrium. We have had wars in 1965 and 1971; East Pakistan separated to become Bangladesh; we have lived through the Afghan wars and their fallout in terms of terrorism, to name but a few. None of these have ‘forced’ the elites to alter the structure of the economy to make it more inclusive and to re-orient policy-making towards the masses.

We are in a crisis situation currently as well. Many commentators are talking of default on international debt obligations as a distinct possibility for Pakistan. Even now, the attempt from the elites is to borrow against the future and avoid default. But there is no indication that there is any willingness to think deeper about the structural issues we are facing. Therefore, the crisis may sustain for some time. Will this crisis change anything at the deeper level? In the language of Dercon, will the crisis force the elites to ‘gamble on development’ and create a new ‘development bargain’ for the society? This remains to be seen.

Pakistan has been in existence for 75 years now, which is time enough to change and/or transform societies quite substantially. We have seen this through the example of other countries. More worrying is the fact that despite our poor performance historically and the difficult place we are in currently, there does not seem to be any major rethinking going on within the elites of the country.

The quest is still for short-term fixes through international bailouts and/or a growth spurt through projects like CPEC. If deeper thinking on structural reforms does not happen, the future decades will be worse than what we have seen in the past, and this is not a good prospect for a country to face up to or live with.

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Ambiguities in Population Control

After witnessing one of history’s largest migrations, Pakistan’s population grew from 30m in 1951 to 220m in 2022. A lack of consensus on population control policies impedes national development, declares ZEBA SATHAR.

THE last 75 years have seen massive socio-economic changes in the subcontinent; one of them is the huge demographic change witnessed in our region. Pakistan’s population has increased sixfold from 30 million in 1951 to 220m in 2022, leading us to a staggering fifth highest position in the world from the 13th in 1951 (when the population included East Pakistan) and eighth in 1981.

We have very little else to offer in terms of human power and education, health and economic achievements. The potential seen in Pakistan in the 1960s and the 1970s has been squandered. South Asia took centre-stage in world population growth and population policies in the 1970s with the realisation that the future course of any country’s development was strongly intertwined with its population trajectory.

Pakistan initiated its population programme much earlier than other regional countries, in the 1960s, but the modernist, development-oriented military regime of Ayub Khan did not translate it appropriately as being related to individual wellbeing and welfare rather than to macro goals of development and growth. With 1971 came the split from the East Wing and the emergence of Bangladesh; that is when the two halves broke into separate pathways of population, politics and development.

One visible effort to ratchet up education, health and population planning was during the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto period (1973-77) when Begum Nusrat Bhutto led us to the famous Bucharest population conference. But this period was cut short by another military coup. This time Gen Ziaul Haq, with his more conservative undertones, took us into down a spiral in terms of population planning. While other countries shot ahead in terms of their population policies, notably Indonesia and Bangladesh, a moratorium was imposed during 1977-88, and the population narrative took on a different meaning.

A TURNING POINT?

Could this have been a turning point? Above all, the regressive actions bred confusion in the minds of the people that religion is at odds with family planning. This conviction spread wide, especially to the middle classes.

The ambiguity and ambivalence regarding the permissibility of family planning in the religion stems from the pronatalist 1943 Maududi treatise that was reprinted in 1962. The main argument was that family planning could not be sponsored as a state policy and enforced upon the people by the government. While presenting several arguments against population ‘control’, he did, however, concede that if it was a question of preserving human life, especially of the mother and the child, parents could adopt any measure in consultation with and on the advice of a medical practitioner.

The latter aspect of the treatise never received much attention. However, the pronatalist views were exploited and used in the movements against Ayub and Bhutto, both of whom supported population planning. Conversely, the clergy in Indonesia, Bangladesh, Jordan, Morocco, Egypt (where the Grand Mufti of Jamia Al-Azhar issued a fatwa in favour of family planning) and in Iran (where a similar fatwa was issued by Imam Khomeini) were unequivocal in their support. In Pakistan, it was not until 2015 that attempts were made to obtain a broad-based consensus on the permissibility of family planning (Figure 1).

BANGLADESH’S SUCCESS

The standout story of Bangladesh’s success in lowering its population size is worth telling. It was achieved through sustained political will at the highest level, a far-sighted and consistent population and development policy, community outreach and women’s empowerment. The outcome was obvious (Figure 2).

Starting at the same level in 1971, Bangladesh already has 61 million less people than us whose needs it had to serve. By the year 2100, Bangladesh is expected to level off to 150 million, while Pakistan is likely to be home to over 400 million. Pakistan has by and large been the most indecisive in reconciling the belief that sheer numbers of people give strength, provide opportunity to exert our might at the borders, increase remittances, and expand political power with the capacity to provide basic rights of primary education, health, clean drinking water and the ability to breathe good, clean air.

The clearly pronatalist National Finance Commission (NFC) Award formula rewards a larger population by province and is the base of political representation and resource distribution on the basis of 82pc weightage for the divisible pool of resources. It stands in contradiction to population policies encouraging fertility decline.

RAPID URBANISATION

A striking feature of Pakistan’s demographic situation is its much more rapid rate of urbanisation than in India and Bangladesh. In one of the world’s largest migrations, the influx of 6.5 million Muslims into Pakistan following the partition of India and their disproportionate move to urban areas was the basis for the major source of growth of cities like Karachi and Lahore.

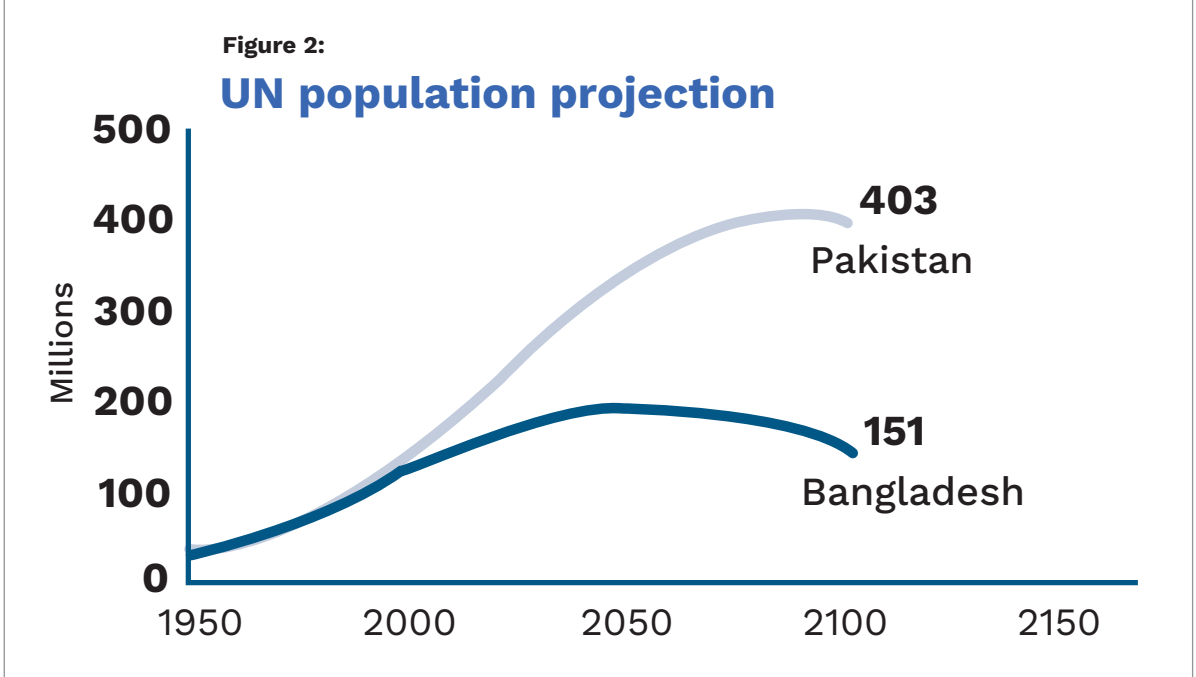
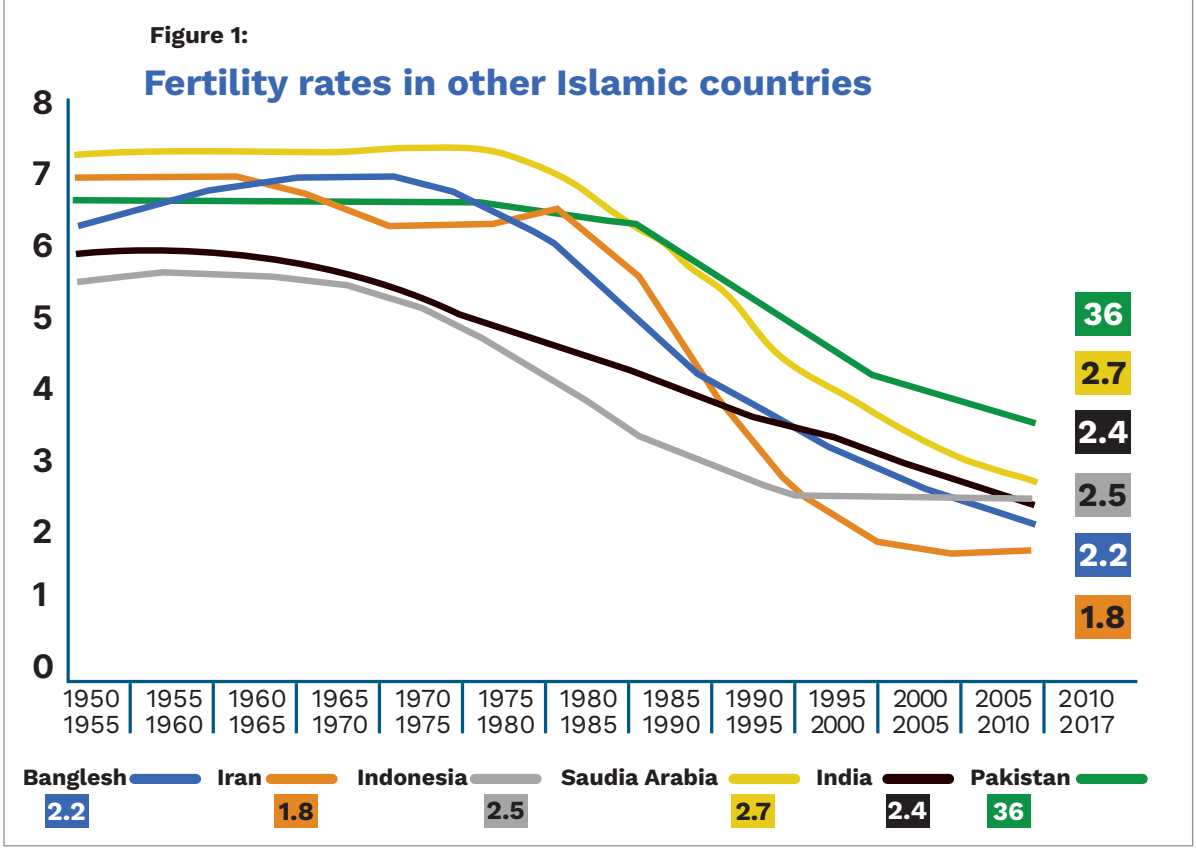
The steadily increasing share of urban population is a result of migration from rural to urban areas, but also continued high fertility in urban areas. More than 50pc of Pakistanis will be living in urban areas by 2050 — already at 2.5 times compared to 1951. The rapid rate of urbanisation has had a profound impact on the social milieu in Pakistan, as more and more Pakistanis move from rural bases to urban areas, even though many might end up in squatter settlements and slums in the big cities.

While social change has always preceded in urban areas, the difference has not been as drastic as found in most other societies. This is because even when rural Pakistanis move to cities and towns, they may do so without their extended, and sometimes even their nuclear, families. Ties with natal relatives and feudal linkages continue to extend their influence despite changes in residence. Certainly, social patronage and control continues to influence values and family size norms though to a much lesser extent. But even more so, improved road links and better transport options lead to frequent home-to-work travel.

Interestingly, provincial fertility differentials have been small, despite considerable differences in levels of development across the regions. Sindh has the lowest fertility rate, but this is primarily due to the large population of Karachi; here, ethnic divisions transform into urban-rural differentials. In other provinces, too, certain ethnic groups, like the Pakhtun and Seraiki populations, have larger numbers of children compared to Urdu-speaking and Punjabi communities.

The fertility decline in Pakistan began in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, coinciding with the post-Zia period (1988-2000), when population growth benefited from being part of the focus on the social sectors under the social action programme. One of the most remarkable and effective achievements was the induction of hundreds of thousands of lady health workers across Pakistan by the government head by Benazir Bhutto. It was a period of hope, but was soon followed in the late 1990s by an economic downturn after a longish period of high economic growth rates in the 1980s.

The resultant expectation was that the rapid decline would continue, but this did not transpire. The military coup in 1999 coincided with economic growth, but fertility declined at a much slower pace and contraceptive use began to lapse. Despite the return to democracy and three successive elected governments,



from 2007 to 2020, population trends at best have remained stagnant.

THE LAST CALL

The setback of more than a decade not only put us behind our neighbouring countries, it also entrenched a mindset that is hard to change. It is difficult to disentangle in a hurry the considerable number of factors that comprise the fabric of Pakistani society — a heterogeneous, vibrant but troubled country — and to link them to fertility changes. But the factors are there for sure.

What we are facing is really the last call to wake up to this sharpening drop in our ranking in per-capita income, literacy, women’s education, and health, especially in comparison with India whose population growth rate has come down to 1pc this year and below replacement fertility to -2.0 children per woman compared to 3.6 in Pakistan.

Bangladesh has a distinct growing economic trajectory owing to the advantage of rising exports, increasing foreign exchange reserves and a competitive edge in the world market. In our case, an earlier focus on economic growth came at the cost of neglect of human capital

development, now exacerbated by illiteracy, unskilled labour, rapid population growth, and poor health indicators. Our prospects to achieve the same results as Bangladesh or other Asian tigers have been much eroded.

In the last 75 years, we have witnessed an erosion of a public consensus on population. The role of the state has outweighed the greater interests of the populace over the last few decades. The state could have played a responsible role in shaping mindsets, providing a solid primary education base, improving curriculum content rather than guiding it away from reflecting on Pakistan’s realities, ensuring that laws are implemented, and introducing new social-sector programmes.

Equally important are clearly articulated policies with consistent funding, particularly population policies that are currently weak and not implemented. The resolution of the impasse in progress on lowering population growth and investing in human development has not been any government’s priority and we are unfortunately paying the huge, avoidable price.

The writer is Country Director, Population Council, Islamabad.

A Failure to Secure Inclusive Growth

The benefits of Pakistan’s economic growth have accrued mainly to powerful elites patronised by the state, preventing any broad-based improvement in living standards and the general quality of life, argues AFSHAN SUBOHI.

WE have, indeed, come a long way over the past 75 years despite having seriously underperformed both economically and politically. No wonder there is a broad consensus that the country had the potential to do much better which could have taken it much farther. The inconsistent progress and the weak quality of economic growth tell a tale of missed opportunities even with abundant human and natural resources.

In hindsight, it is clear that initial work on the foundations of the new state was less than ideal. We can rationalise why it was what it was, but there is no point denying critical factors related to, say, institution-building and nation-building. After almost half-a-century of having the country’s Constitution (1973), it is unfortunate that the working masses are still longing for a decent living standard and equitable economic opportunities in a country whose dependence on donors to keep the economy afloat is only increasing.

The deck is visibly loaded against the poor, the minorities and the country’s women even before they get a chance to play their hand. This exposes the dysfunctionality of the state and the bankruptcy of planning by the coterie at the helm; the ruling elite

In 2000, UN members adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and, at the end of the designated 15-year period, they adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the next 15 years, pledging to end poverty and curb inequality for sustainable and inclusive development across the world. Each UN member country was tasked with translating the goals into benchmarked quantifiable targets to trace and track national progress. Pakistan failed in self-set targets in all the seven MDGs, while progress on the 17 SDGs has been quite unsatisfactory thus far.

All three pillars of state in Pakistan, it seems, have a problem with the poor rather than poverty. State institutions seem ultra-sensitive to the needs of the fortunate few who are already well positioned to make do without special care. Wealth begets wealth, but it multiplies geo-

metrically when facilitated by the state’s policies, and assisted by state structures.

It is not surprising, then, that the elite have amassed wealth in record time without judiciously paying taxes, taking risks, facing competition or delivering productivity gains. Regardless of the party in power, their interests are mostly secure. Their fortunes though have shone brighter under dictatorial regimes.

As inequality continued to worsen over the years, the government stopped reporting the embarrassing reality. The chapter on ‘income and regional disparity’ in the *Economic Survey of Pakistan* was first merged with the one on ‘poverty’, and was later dropped altogether. The issue of inequality has been highlighted by some writers and in certain studies by economic research entities, but it fails to capture the attention of the relevant quarters in any meaningful way.

Luckily, the UNDP’s National Human Development Report 2021 attempted to shed new light on stark income inequality and the economic privileges of the elites in Pakistan. These elites include those from the corporate sector, the landed aristocracy, the military and the political hierarchy. The estimated cost of favours they receive, according to the said report, is Rs3.6 trillion (\$17.4bn), or roughly 6pc of the national economy.

The corporate sector has been identified as the biggest beneficiary of the privileges in the form of tax breaks, cheap input prices, higher output prices or preferential access to credit, land and services. The richest 1pc, who collectively own 9pc of Pakistan’s wealth, are found to be the second in order of unearned privileges. The feudal aristocracy, which makes up 1pc of the population but owns 22pc of all arable farmland, stands third. The UNDP found that the military — with its huge business, public works and real estate interests — receives Rs355.3bn (\$1.7bn) in privileges.

The richest 20pc in the land command 50pc of the national income, while the poorest 1pc holds a mere 0.15pc of that pie. The report also highlights regional inequalities in service delivery, with high-income areas receiving higher public expenditure.

For a deeper historical insight on multidimensional inequality and how it evolved in the country, the 75-year period can be divided into seven phases: 1947-58, 1959-71, 1972-78, 1979-88, 1989-1998, 1999-2008, and from 2009 to date. Key factors that influenced the government’s approach towards disparities include the type of the government, the international alignments and the economic thought that influenced the direction of the public policies.

In the initial phase, there were abrupt changes in government as it was overwhelmed by problems and too preoccupied by the survival of the new state to care about anything else. In this period, competing interests wrestled for the upper hand in the power structure, while a mixed approach was followed in the economic sphere.

The second phase was marked by military takeover and a mixed approach towards the economy, borrowing ideas from both capitalist and socialist models. The regime hand-held the feeble business class. It established the Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC), which used public resources to establish industry, and handed it over to the private sector on a platter.

Gen Ayub Khan also introduced high-yielding seeds to initiate the Green Revolution and continued with the five-year plans that were initiated in 1955, borrowing the idea from the erstwhile Soviet Union.

During this period, the state was ideologically more inspired by the market model. It was an expressed state policy to promote the concentration of wealth, mentioned in as many words in the Second Five-Year Plan (1960-65), to realise higher investment rates.

Despite near 6pc annual growth rate, inequality touched new peaks. Renowned economist Dr Mehbub ul Haq, the architect of the Second Plan, wrote a booklet titled *Poverty Curtain* in 1969 in which he argued that 22 business families had come to control much of industrial, banking and insurance sectors in Pakistan. Despite the high average growth rate, public discontent burst out on to the streets, leading to uprising in East Pakistan and culminating in the country’s dismemberment.

In the third phase, the populist government introduced agriculture reforms and opted for a nationalisation policy to free the economy from the shackles of powerful monopolies. In this period, the pace of growth almost halved to an average 3pc. The economic crisis was deepened by the oil shock of the 1970s. The phase ended with the military once again in the saddle.

In the fourth phase, global and geopolitical concerns ensured free flow of dollars to the country, creating some fiscal space for the government to do something substantial in economic terms. Instead, the majority of the population remained far away from the minds of those who reported serious improvement in GDP growth.

The fifth phase saw a return to democracy, but political stability could not be secured. Four elected governments were dismissed successively and prematurely on charges of corruption. Such instability did not allow the GDP growth to sustain itself and the annual average growth rate dropped to 4pc. The phase ended with another general taking over the reins of the country.

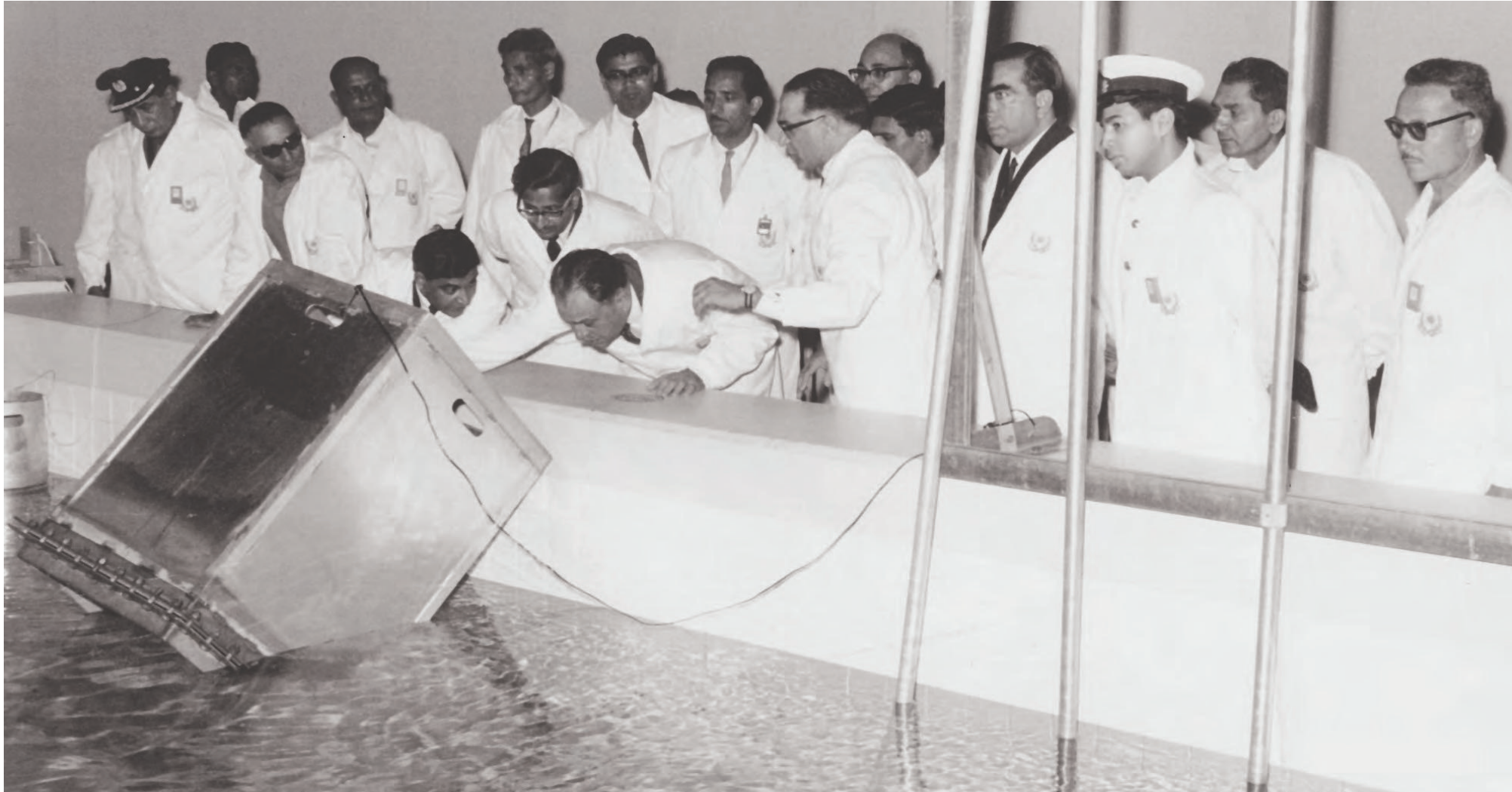
Though the government was clueless at the beginning of the sixth phase, the 9/11 episode came to its rescue and overnight Gen Pervez Musharraf started rubbing shoulders with the high and might leading the so-called ‘war on terror’. From a pariah state, Pakistan became the most favoured nation, receiving a steady flow of dollars once again, which, once again, were used to offer patronage to the urban and feudal elite.

During the last and continuing phase, four governments — one each of the three major parties and the current coalition — have been in power. The high mark of this phase in economic terms has been the multi-billion-dollar China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Beyond lip service, the last 14 years have seen nothing to suggest that any of the four dispensations gave any attention to the issue of growing inequality in society. The famed common man, in whose name and for whom all decisions are apparently taken, keeps looking on in utter disbelief.

The writer is an economic journalist.

THE SAD STORY OF THE REJECTION OF SCIENCE

There is little appreciation in Pakistan for the centrality of science in every modern economic pursuit. PERVEZ HOODBHOY deplores the degradation of our scientific capabilities and wonders whether we can change our worldview.



President Ayub Khan looking at the glow of the nuclear reactor at PINSTECH through a special viewer in a water pool in the mid-1960s. (Courtesy: Ayub Khan Archives/ Tahir Ayub)



Photo: Dawn Archives

Dr Abdus Salam, the 1979 Nobel Laureate in Physics, led the establishment of the Nuclear Institute PINSTECH in Islamabad in 1965.



Photo: Dawn Archives

Dr Salimuzzaman Siddiqui was a leading organic scientist, who established the Pakistan National Science Council and later the Hussain Ebrahim Jamal Research Institute of Chemistry.

SCIENCE matters. Many yearn for science-free times when wars were fought with swords by valiant Ertugrul-like horsemen. Quite a few want still earlier *riyasats*. But I have yet to meet a fellow Pakistani willing to have a bad tooth pulled out without anaesthesia or who sends emissaries instead of using a cellphone. These days, electricity and gas loadshedding have triggered a collective nervous breakdown, while the price of petrol is all that people talk about. All of this would be utterly incomprehensible to those who lived a mere hundred years ago. Ancient civilisations had nothing even remotely similar to the science that exists today.

Like it or not, all modern science — that which is rapidly changing our world on a day-to-day basis — is the 400-year-old child of European modernity. Although many civilisations — Egyptian, Babylonian, Chinese, Indian, Greek and Arabian (chronologically ordered) — helped create that science, not enough was known earlier to create an overarching picture of a universe run by physical law. Nor did earlier civilisations use science to create functional technologies like we do today. Instead, significant advances in ancient science came from men of genius following scholarly interests rather than economic ends.

But now that civilisation on earth has become science-based, the pursuit of science is systematic and relentless. Every country is rushing to acquire mastery over it and, even more, to use it to create technologies to fulfil social desires. Although science and technology (S&T) are two different worlds, the boundary between them has blurred with time. For example, learning how cells divide was considered pure science in the 1800s. Today, it is crucial to discovering cures for cancer.

An attempt to situate Pakistan’s S&T may be made using two different lenses; to compare today’s situation with what existed in 1947 (and even earlier); and to draw parallels between Pakistan and other countries in the region. As a starting point, I will take the advent of modern education in India (as opposed to traditional education) because that is where the bifurcation between modern and conventional ways of life began.

PRE-PARTITION SITUATION

India during the Mughal rule saw spectacular achievements in architecture, art and administrative matters. But there was little curiosity in matters of the intellect, particularly science and philosophy. As a result, no university was built in those three centuries of otherwise brilliant rule. Although internal feuds and succession issues were doubtless a significant cause of decline, this lack of interest in intellectual pursuits eventually led to 40-50,000 Englishmen, armed with technology and the scientific method, overpowering and crushing what had been a magnificent empire. Few understood the secret source of English power better than Mirza Ghalib. Differing from those who craved a return to past glories or who suggested picking up arms against the *firangis*, his thinking was quintessentially modern:

صاحبان انگلستان را نگر
شیوہ و انداز ایناں را نگر
زین ہنر منداناں ہنر بیشی گرفت
سعی بر پیشینیاں پیشی گرفت

Go, look at the sahibs of England; Go learn from them their skills and ways; From their hands have sprung wonders and wonders; Go try and see if you can excel them.

Science education in British India was spread by three principal agents: British government, Christian missionaries, and education reformers from both Hindu and Muslim communities. Whereas the Hindus had

Table 1: Regional comparison with respect to prowess in science and technology.

	Academic Sciences	Space	Nuclear	Engineering	Biotech	Agrisciences
Pakistan	weak	weak	middle	weak	middle	middle
India	strong	strong	strong	strong	strong	middle
Iran	strong	middle	strong	middle	strong	middle

many well-known reformers, among the Muslims the only well-known one was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. His vigorous advocacy of science and modernity as a means of uplifting Indian Muslims differed sharply from those who feared learning English and science would diminish their religious faith. He had disagreed with Ghalib earlier, but, upon reflection, he became convinced that India’s Muslims must abandon conservatism and travel new paths.

Sir Syed’s heroic efforts notwithstanding, Muslim enrolment in schools remained low. The University of Calcutta was the first secular Western-style university in India, and set standards as far away as Punjab. The requirements being rigorous by the standards of the time, only a few Muslims applied or qualified for admission. Although the populations in Bengal were proportional in size, hundreds of Hindus but just two Muslims passed the first BA examination in 1858.

EARLY YEARS

Let us fast-forward to 1947. Of the 16 universities in British India, Pakistan inherited only one teaching university, i.e. the Punjab University in Lahore. Additionally, there were some 25-30 colleges in the areas that are now Pakistan. Most were in Punjab; Balochistan had none. Because Muslims had entered academia

Pakistan’s space programme began in 1961 with the launch of meteorological rockets provided by the United States. Initiated and headed by Professor Abdus Salam, the Space & Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) grew rapidly in the 1960s and was more advanced than the Indian programme at the time.

Pakistan’s nuclear programme was set in place with the assistance of the US and, until 1972, had been directed towards nuclear power production and basic research. Personnel in the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) were sent abroad in the 1960s for training. Canada provided Pakistan’s first nuclear reactor, the Karachi nuclear power plant (Kanupp). The returnees successfully maintained and operated the reactor even after the withdrawal of Canadian fuel and technical support. India’s 1974 nuclear test led to Pakistan’s open desire to match the Indian bomb, causing the reversal of the West’s nuclear assistance.

In industrial engineering, there was one outstanding institution, the Batala Engineering Company. Founded by entrepreneur C.M. Latif, Beco had relocated itself to Lahore from Batala (in what is now Indian Punjab) after partition. Beco produced a diverse range of heavy and light engineering products, such as diesel engines, machine tools and lathes. Like India’s Tata Industries, it was well set on the path of high growth, but was killed by the wave of nationalisation in 1972.

Table 2: Pakistani exports compared to those of India and China.

	Software	Pharma	Hi-Tech
Pakistan	\$2bn	\$0.3bn	\$0.3bn
India	\$149bn	\$24bn	\$21bn
China	\$62bn	\$23bn	\$75bn

late and in fewer numbers, the senior faculty in almost all institutions of higher learning was predominantly Hindu at the time of partition. Once rioting began, they fled to India and Muslims from lower ranks filled their positions. Academic quality plummeted.

With time, education numbers slowly increased. By 1969 there were a total of eight universities in united Pakistan. The breakup and subsequent emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 temporarily froze further development. However, the quick post-partition promotions of junior faculty had profoundly debilitating consequences in terms of teaching quality. Mediocres rose to become department heads, deans, and vice-chancellors. They blocked bright young entrants lest their authority was challenged. As a result, rote learning became almost as common in universities and colleges as in schools and seminaries.

Nevertheless, in Pakistan’s early years, there were pockets of excellence in some S&T fields. I will mention only four.

The creation of Islamabad University in 1967, and in particular the Institute of Physics associated with it, was the high point of academic research in Pakistan. Founded by Riazuddin, a student of Professor Salam, the institute maintained high-quality research in the frontier area of particle physics until its decline in the mid-1970s. At its peak, it compared favourably against a mid-quality physics department in the US.

ASSESSING THE PRESENT

Globalisation means no country produces more than a fraction of what it needs and consumes. The more vibrant ones produce relatively more, have higher living standards for more citizens, are better organised, and have cleaner environments. Pakistan also has these aspirations, but is far more reliant on technologies developed elsewhere, such as automobiles, locomotives, aircraft, pharmaceuticals, computers, medical instrumentation, etc.

In principle, a small ecosystem could have developed around imported technologies, but there has been insufficient improvisation and innovation. For example, the once flourishing domestic electric fan industry has been pushed out by cleverer Chinese products. The small domestic output of finished products has led to a staggering trade imbalance that has compounded over time, leading to the current economic crisis.

I have attempted to compare Pakistan’s S&T in 2022 with other countries in the region based on performance in various domains of science, but the attempt admittedly is qualitative and subjective because a proper methodical study does not exist (Table 1).

Agri-sciences: These aim at raising yields of sugar, cotton, wheat, rice, and other crops by adapting and promoting standard techniques of pesticide use, plantation patterns, sowing methods, etc. As highly practical and relatively simple sciences, they are offshoots of the 1960s Green Revolution and are crucial for feeding Pakistan’s rapidly expanding population.

Nearly a dozen Pakistani institutions, such as National Institute for Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (NIBGE), seem to have significantly improved local production and have reportedly developed better varieties of cotton, wheat, rice, tea and various fruits. Drip irrigation, food processing, and scientific livestock management are low-cost, but high-return investments.

Defence technology: Pakistan manufactures fission nuclear weapons and intermediate-range missiles. For both, the basic templates were provided by China, but local manufacturing capabilities had to be developed. The JF-17 fighter and Al-Khalid tank, produced with Chinese collaboration, are now force mainstays. In the 1980s, France provided three Agosta-90B submarines that were serviced locally. Over time a burgeoning Pakistani arms industry developed that now turns out a range of weapons from grenades to tanks, night vision devices to laser-guided weapons. However, the website of the Defence Export Promotion Organisation reveals little of what is being offered for sale. Pakistani arms exports have reportedly stalled in recent years. Poor quality control and lack of innovation are said to be responsible.

Space programme: Suparco has had six decades to mature, but as far as space exploration goes, it has practically folded up. The official website shows no future plans. Instead, it seems to have settled for routine testing of variants of missile series acquired from China. India, on the other hand, has clocked several major achievements, such as two successful orbiter missions to the Moon (2008) and one mission to Mars (2013). In 2017, India launched a record 100 satellites into orbit from the Indian Polar Space Launch Vehicle.

Civilian technology: Pakistan’s top 10 exports in 2021 were textiles, cotton, cereals, copper, fruits, minerals, sports goods, leather goods, software, and medical instruments. Only the last two items rely on S&T. As of 2020, the last year for which data is available, Pakistan’s hi-tech exports were 70 times lower than India’s and 2,523 times lower than China’s (Table 2; the last entry is from the Mundi Index, which defines hi-tech exports as products with high research and development [R&D] intensity, such as in aerospace, computers, pharmaceuticals, scientific instruments and electrical machinery).

The above, however, understates the use of S&T in Pakistan’s domestic industrial production, which hinges critically upon imported machinery. This is used to produce textiles, Pakistan’s most important export, as well as cement, vegetable oil, fertiliser, sugar, steel, machinery, tobacco, paper, chemicals and food processing. Imported machinery has created an industrial ecosystem, but finished goods imported from China have adversely impacted many small industries.

Academic research: In developed countries, universities are the engines of scientific progress. Working in tandem with the industry, they help create new products and processes. On the other hand, in developing countries with small industrial bases, universities and colleges are primarily useful in creating a large pool of

A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE FOR TEAM PAKISTAN

The overall decline in sport in Pakistan has been as rapid and spectacular as success had once been, laments former national hockey champion ISLAHUDDIN SIDDIQUI.



President Dwight Eisenhower sporting the green blazer of the Pakistan Cricket Team shaking hands with the team Captain Fazal Mahmood at National Stadium, Karachi, during the Third Test played against Australia on December 8, 1959. (Courtesy: Ayub Khan Archive/ Tahir Ayub)

SPORTS in many ways is the bond that has over the years kept the nation – the Pakistani nation – united in even the trickiest of times. After all, our sportspersons were the first to have the national flag raised around the world. In doing so, they provided the nation its identity in the larger world. And it was an identity that had pride and passion as its key characteristics.

In April 1951, for instance, Hashim Khan rose from nowhere to pick up the British Open title which at the time was considered the world championship. Till then, on the international stage, Pakistan had thus far featured in two events; the war and UN-led ceasefire in Kashmir in 1948, and the decision to join the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in 1950. It is not too hard to see what sports was able to do in terms of promoting a soft, positive image of Pakistan.

Interestingly, while the country was in its nascent years, the great Khan was in his late-30s when he grabbed international headlines, which is well past the shelf life of most international players. When he lifted the last of his seven trophies, he was in his mid-40s. The only time he failed to finish at the top was in 1957 when another Pakistani, Roshan Khan, beat him in the final. His last title came in 1958, a few months ahead of the country's first martial law!

During the 1950s, Hashim Khan was not alone on the global circuit. In fact, he was in good company as the national cricket team started catching the global eye right after the country got its Test status. Led by Abdul Hafeez Kardar, Pakistan became, and has since remained, the only country to win at least one Test in its debut series with all the other Test-playing countries, beating India in Lucknow in 1952, England at The Oval in 1954, New Zealand and Australia in Karachi in 1955 and 1956, respectively, and the West Indies in Trinidad in 1958.

The public imagination was captured like nothing else by the exploits, among others, of Fazal Mahmood, especially at The Oval, and Hanif Mohammad, the original Little Master. At the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados, Hanif became just the sixth player at the time to score a triple century. But more than the century, it was the making of it that won the hearts of the people and the wider appreciation of the cricketing world for its grit and determination.

With a first innings deficit of 473 runs and with more than three days to go, Hanif dropped anchor, batting for nine consecutive sessions, and lasted a world record 970 minutes to help Pakistan earn a respectable draw. His record stands to date, and his 337 remains one of the game's all-time epics.

It was this concoction of heroics against heavy odds and resilience in the face of grim adversity that provided the nation with the high it needed while grappling with its own woes in certain other and perhaps more critical segments of national life.

With squash and cricket running parallel in terms of timeline and exploits, Abdul Khaliq earned himself the title of the Fastest Man of Asia when he set a new record of 100-meter sprint in 10.6 seconds at the 1954 Asian Games.

In subsequent editions of the Games, he was given good company by Abdul Raziq, Mohammad Iqbal, Mohammad Nawaz and Mubarik Shah in the track-and-field segment, while medals were also earned in wrestling, weightlifting, cycling, boxing and volleyball. From 13 medals at the 1954 edition of the Games, Pakistan's tally rose to 28 in 1962; a peak that has never been touched since.

Elsewhere, Khwaja Saeed Hai made his mark in tennis, becoming the first Pakistani to reach the main draw of a Grand Slam through qualifying rounds. He subsequently made appearances at the Wimbledon Championships, the French Open and the US Open from 1955 onwards in addition to being a regular at Davies Cup encounters.

When the French Tennis Federation celebrated the centenary of French Open, it built a commemorative wall at the famed Roland Garros, displaying the names of players who had done well at the tournament. Saeed Hai's name was good enough to feature on that wall.

THE NATIONAL GAME

With all this happening, hockey was taking its time and there was a reason behind it. Unlike cricket, there was no tradition of bilateral encounters in the game. It depended on international invitational tournaments, and the lone global title was the Olympics. After failing to make it big at the 1948 and 1952 editions, Pakistan registered its first podium finish at the 1956 Olympics, held in Melbourne, Australia, with a silver medal. It was also Pakistan's first Olympics medal in any discipline.

Along with it came the gold medal at the Asian Games in which hockey was included for the first time in 1958. This was the country's first gold medal in an international hockey competition, and was followed by gold at the 1960 Olympics and the 1962 Asian Games.

Between 1956 and 1972, Pakistan featured in five consecutive Olympic finals that netted two gold medals and three silver. This coincided with four gold medals and one silver at the Asian Games between 1958 and 1974. Sandwiched between the two events was the World Cup that was conceptualised, introduced and executed by Pakistan though hosted in Spain owing to the troubled times Pakistan was facing in 1971.

With this glut of silverware, hockey more than justified its status of being the National Game, and within no time Abdul Hamid Hameedi, M.H. Atif, Abdul Waheed Khan, Anwaar Ahmed Khan, Naseer Bunda, Tanvir Dar and many others became household names.



Samina Baig (above) in 2022 became the first Pakistani woman to scale K2, followed within by hours by Naila Kiani (below).



Interestingly, most of these encounters were reflective of something more than a mere victory on the hockey field. They actually provided some sort of catharsis to a nation wronged by its neighbours with which it had to cut its umbilical cord to become an independent nation. The extra bit of excitement and tension that mark Pakistan-India games was sustained by hockey even though the younger generation generally associates it with cricket.

Since bilateral games were not part of the larger hockey tradition, the two countries only met in international tournaments and there was always more than the match at stake because more often than not, the two teams met in the finals.

Since Pakistan's inaugural cricketing tour to India in 1952, the two nations met only thrice over the next about nine years. And from 1961 to 1978, there were no cricketing ties at all. During all these long years, the

burden of sporting rivalry was carried by hockey owing to the encounters in Olympics, Asian Games and the World Cup.

HOCKEY FIELD OR THE BATTLEFIELD

In effect, the two countries met either on the hockey field or on the battlefield in that lengthy phase. The intensity of the latter got seamlessly transferred to the former. It was only natural that in due course, sports also took on military overtones, and hockey represented the life-and-death pendulum for the masses.

Starting 1951 with Hashim Khan, all this global glory in the sporting arena was in contrast to the political merry-go-round in the country. Foreign Minister Chaudhry Zafarullah Khan did make his mark when he became a member of the International Court of Justice and subsequently became its vice-president, but other than that, sports remained the nation's identity in the larger global community, especially at the people's level.

I started my international hockey days in 1967, two decades after independence, mind you. But even then I was taken by surprise on various occasions when I came across people who had never heard anything about Pakistan, and it was only because of our team's performance on the hockey field that made them curious enough to have a handshake with us and get to know a few things about our great land.

My memories are quite vivid about the 1972 Olympics that took place in the German city of Munich. As a tradition, players of rival teams exchange national colours or badges at the start of the match. Almost at every match we played, during such traditional exchanges I found players from various participating countries unable to make out our identity. It was only after the word Pakistan was uttered to them that they used to instantly remark, "Oh, Pakistan! Hockey ... Number one in the world!"

The 1978 World Cup in the Argentinean city of Buenos Aires was the first time for a huge number of Argentines to have ever heard of Pakistan. By the end of the tournament, however, the Pakistan team was not only recognised but also cheered around the grounds. It was all because the players had been able to impress the natives with their performance. Lives of most people who played with me, or before me, are riddled with such memories.

As a player it has always been an honour to be representing the country. I have never come across anyone who may not share this sentiment. Whatever the sports, the sentiment remains the same. But more than being mere representatives, Pakistani players have been more of an ambassador for the country, winning people's hearts and building bridges between peoples in a much more effective manner than, may I dare say, some of the country's designated ambassadors.

So, it was hockey, cricket and, of course, squash that in the early years brought glory to the country. But more important in the context of the circumstances, perhaps, was the fact that sports victories were able to earn recognition and goodwill for Pakistan.

Internally, sports provided the psychological distraction the masses needed as a nation.

Sports, in many ways, was the most potent nation-building tool at the country's disposal. This made the sportsmen work even harder for they were carrying on their shoulders the hopes of an entire nation. They were always under the microscope of public eye that was aided in ample measure by the magnifying glass of the national media. An opinion piece by seasoned sports journalist Haleem Ahmed in the *Dawn* issue of Aug 14, 1967, carried the headline: 'Decline in sports: causes and cure'. Today, we look back at those very years with misty eyes and talk of 'the past glory', but when it was all happening, we, the sportspersons, had our critics.

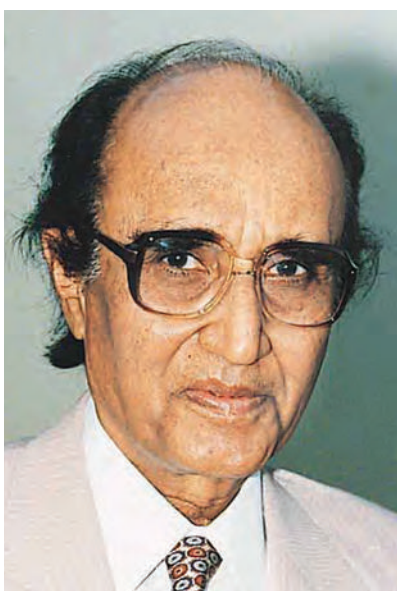
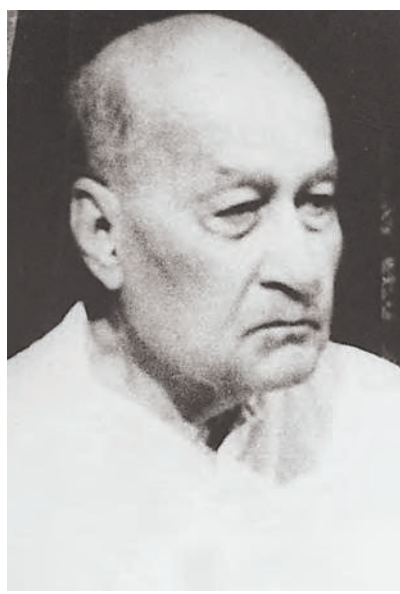
Perhaps that was one reason we tried to excel beyond our own individual capacities. Just a year after the said article in *Dawn*, for instance, Pakistan won hockey gold at the 1968 Olympics. Maybe *Dawn* can claim to have some share in that victory!

The mid-1970s saw Pakistan sports hitting a fresh purple patch and with a lot of new heroes. From Qamaruzzaman and Mohibullah Khan to Hidayat Jahan and Gogi Allaudin, Pakistan ruled the squash world.

In cricket, Mushtaq Mohammad, as captain, took Pakistan to another level, registering wins against Australia and the West Indies on away tours as well as home victories against New Zealand and India. This he did by invigorating the nucleus of the team which comprised the likes of Majid Khan, Sadiq Mohammad, Zaheer Abbas and Asif Iqbal. He gave confidence to the mercurial Wasim Raja that enabled him to do some justice to

URDU WRITING HAS AN IDENTITY OF ITS OWN

Over the years, Pakistani Urdu literature has developed differently from its Indian counterpart and reflects ideological battles and aesthetic movements that have enriched our literary language, writes RAUF PAREKH.



Literary footprints of giants, like (clockwise) Saadat Hasan Manto, Intizar Hussain, Mushtaq Ahmed Yousufi and Josh Malihabadi, among others, are indelible in the realm of Pakistani literature. Seen on the right is the iconic Faiz Ahmed Faiz at the Urdu Markaz Mushaira in the 1980s that was organised by the BBC in London, which was a favourite spot for intellectuals who tried to stay away from Zia's Pakistan. He is flanked here by Ahmed Faraz and Zehra Nigah on his right and by Iftikhar Arif, Jameela Dehlvi, Shohrat Bukhari and Gopi Chand Narang on his left. (Courtesy: BBC/ White Star Photo)

WHEN the sun peeped out from behind the horizon on August 14, 1947, much to its surprise it was an altogether different landscape in the subcontinent, not only politically but also literarily and linguistically. Urdu literature, hitherto created in an undivided British India, was to be written now in two different countries with their own ideals, credos and convictions. Events that took place before independence had had a tremendous effect on Urdu and its literature. In post-independence era, distinct milieus of the two nascent countries were to impact the creative process in the years to come and schism between the two Urdu literatures to be created in two different countries was only to widen.

When the Urdu-Hindi controversy emerged in 1867, writers of both the languages had taken up a different approach and, consciously or unconsciously, were influenced by nationalistic sentiments in the aftermath of the controversy. Hindu writers were trying to accommodate in Hindi as many words of Sanskrit or Prakrit origin as they could. Muslim authors did the same with words of Persian and Arabic origin.

Munshi Premchand, one of the pioneers of Urdu short story and a much revered figure of Urdu fiction, used to write in Urdu and his writings were translated — transcribed, actually — into Hindi. But with the passage of time and under the influence of Hindu reformist and revivalist movements, he began writing in Hindi and his writings were then rewritten for Urdu edition. Masood Husain Khan proved that *Godaan*, Premchand's masterpiece, was originally penned in Hindi, and today it

is debated whether it should be considered an Urdu novel or classified as a 'translation'.

The episode indicates the sentiments in pre-independence era. In the post-independence era, Hindi's influence on the Urdu language in India, both written and spoken, is evident. Pakistani Urdu gradually became distinct from its Indian version, with a marked difference in vocabulary, idiom and even orthographic preferences. In Indian Urdu, under the influence of Rasheed Hasan Khan, different spellings of certain words are preferred. The impact of Pakistani languages, especially Punjabi, contributed to a new mood and colour of Pakistani Urdu.

IDEOLOGICAL BATTLEGROUND

In June 1947, Dr M.D. Taseer had raised the issue of Pakistani literature, emphasising the need to define how Pakistani literature was going to be different from Indian literature, and also from literature created before independence in British India. Taseer had also asked what the stance of Pakistani writers would be on the issue of Kashmir — much to the chagrin of our Marxist intellectuals.

Mohammad Hasan Askari, having migrated to Pakistan, raised the same issues right after independence, and stressed the need to portray Pakistani identity and adopt nationalistic approach in literary works. Askari and Taseer felt that Urdu literature to be written in Pakistan must reflect authors' loyalty to the new state. Soon this turned out to be a movement-like trend. Spearheaded by Askari, it is known as Pakistani Lit-

erature Movement in the chronicles of literary history.

Those who were for Pakistan's Islamic identity and wanted it to be reflected in literature written here launched another literary movement, Tehreek-i-Adab-i-Islami, or the Islamic Literature Movement. Mahir-ul Qadri, Naeem Siddiqi and some other writers were the key figures the movement most of whose members were basically rightists.

It is argued that Askari soon mixed up the two streams, creating a bit of confusion. A little later, Askari declared that Urdu literature was suffering from *ja-mood*, or inertia. As critics were busy countering his claim of an 'inert' Urdu literature, Askari dropped another bomb, saying it was all but dead. In fact, whatever Askari said made ripples, and even today his school of thought, that he had single-handedly founded, exists and many of the critics refer to Askari with reverence.

The contrasting point of view was put forward by the progressives; the leftists. They saw no reason to merge religion with literature, and their idiom to describe the reality, as they saw it, was in sharp contrast to that of the rightists. Faiz Ahmed Faiz, for instance, described independence as not quite the 'morning' one had waited for. In fact, he called it a 'night-bitten morning' marked by 'stained light'.

In the 1950s, the tussle between the two streams was at its peak and fully reflected in literary output and even literary journalism. Interestingly, both schools of thought accused each other of sloganeering.

With the introduction of McCarthyism in Pakistan and the resultant crackdown against communists and their sympathisers, the progressives had to keep quiet

for a while as many of them were persecuted by the state. Faiz, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi, Sajjad Zaheer and many others were imprisoned. Of them, the most interesting case is that of Sajjad Zaheer who, an Indian national, was sent to head the Communist Party of Pakistan (CPP). Having crossed the border illegally over to Pakistan, he was arrested and jailed. On his release, he headed back to India and, on arrival there, said he was happy to be back in his "own country". Among the progressives, Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi was much clearer in his head than many of his comrades about the direction they wanted Pakistani state to take going forward.

On its part, the rightist movement was unable to produce another towering figure like Askari. Unlike the progressives who wrote some really great literary pieces, the rightists, despite all the rhetoric, could not produce a single writer or poet that could truly be called great.

Away from all such debates, Josh Malihabadi continued to wield his craft like only he could. Having remained in India till the mid-1950s, he was a rather late entrant to the national literary scene. His stature as the *Shah'iri-Inqilab*, or the Poet of the Revolution, was well-acknowledged on either side of the border.

SYMBOLISM AND MODERNISM

In the wake of the first martial in 1958, there came more restrictions on the freedom of expression. It is generally believed that the martial law had prompted

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MAINTAINING THE LITERARY MOMENTUM

A proliferation of genres has overtaken Pakistan's English-language literature. ANUM SHAHARYAR explores its progress and concludes that more attention needs to be paid towards securing a robust English-language publishing industry.

IN this day and age, anyone still insisting that there is no good Pakistani literature written in the English language needs to spend a little more time browsing a bookstore or revisiting their prejudice. This particular complaint — still repeated ad nauseam — has lost what weight it had till a few decades ago. Pardon the cliché, but an 'explosion' of writing by Pakistani authors, both living in the country and abroad, long upturned the popularly held misconception about the publishing history of Pakistan.

While most Pakistani writers gravitated in the earlier days to writing about politics and/or religion, *desi* readers now have the privilege of finding themselves represented in almost all possible genres; well, almost. The most famous of our authors — those whom the mind first thinks of at the mention of Pakistani English literature — played a huge part in paving the way so that those who followed could experiment with various forms and techniques.

Today, we have a range to be proud of. From Kamila Shamsie's control over her prose, to Sara Suleri's lyrical approach; from the on-the-spot representation in Omar Shahid Hamid's works, to the blending of humour and satire by Haroon Khalid Akhtar; from the adaptation of Mohsin Hamid's novel into a movie, to the Academy award nomination for an adaptation of Bapsi Sidhwa's novel; and from the Sitara-i-Imtiaz given to Mohammad Hanif, to the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature given to H.M. Naqvi. All of these accolades, nominations and honours bear testimony to

the ground we have covered over the years.

To their credit, today's authors took the opportunity and made it their own. From science fiction offerings, by well-known Bina Shah and emerging talent Sidra Sheikh, to humour as a storytelling tactic adopted by Moni Mohsin and Saba Imtiaz, we can now enjoy the types of literature that are usually only possible to experiment with once you have nurtured a willing audience.

Our writers can now proudly cater to all; including the young ones, with wonderfully creative middle-grade fiction from the likes of Aisha Saeed and Saadia Faruqi, as well as those, like Shazaf Fatima Haider and Farah Naz Rishi, who present a teenager's perspective about romance and growing up.

Poets, too, are presenting offerings in the English language, with Fatimah Asghar following ably in the footsteps of Daud Kamal and Moniza Alvi. Even a really niche genre like medical fiction is finding a place thanks mainly to Saad Shafiq.

In the realm of short stories, the offerings of writers like Daniyal Mueenuddin and Mira Sethi are refreshing. Arguably the biggest winner, however, has been the domain of fantasy and horror, with the brilliant world-building in Sami Shah's novels, the terrifying creatures in Ayesha Muzaffar's works, and the marvellous tales in Usman Malik's collections. The characters are all endearingly local, yet so fantastical in their presentation.

All these authors, and many more, have been supported in no small part by the analytical eye and keen interest of researchers and writers, like Muneeza Shamsie and

Mushtaq Bilal, who are critics and commentators without whom no literary industry can hope to flourish.

What all these works have in common, beyond their ability to capture the attention of their readers, is the fact that they talk in no uncertain detail about what can loosely be termed the *desi* experience. Captured within the covers of such books are characters whose skin colour is brown and eye colour is black; who understand local conventions and engage in regional humour. These characters grow up in settings very familiar to most Pakistanis, and interact with the world in ways that the local reader could imagine themselves interacting.

For the majority of the readers who grew up on a steady diet of American pulp fiction, it can be quite the shock to realise that characters who look like them and think like them can exist within the make-believe realm of storytelling.

From reading about snow during Christmas and prom night shenanigans, to now reading about Eid celebrations and tales of 1947 — an introduction to Pakistani literature can feel a little like discovering a lost part of one's self. It brings with it the bittersweet realisation that you yourself could be at the centre of someone's story; a character in the narrative who actually makes a difference. After all, what are these huge, vocal movements about creating further diversity in literature if not to help every person find a reflection of themselves in the stories they read?

Though we have taken many leaps forward, there is still some way to go. There are conversations happening in *desi* literary communities about how not to stereotype

South Asians. There is a healthy criticism about how writing about mangoes, dust, or loadshedding should now be considered cliché to move away from. Debates on how best to represent religion and culture, which are so enmeshed within our societies that it takes an effort just to separate the two, are always ongoing.

Those on the devout end of the spiritual spectrum find faults in various representations. Some argue that showing the worst of society only projects a negative image of the country, while others argue in favour of being closer to reality.

There are further conversations about the very formatting of Pakistani books: why should local words be italicised in books by foreign publishers, or why should mentions of local festivals or foods be accompanied by detailed footnotes? Exoticisation, apparently, is now inciting disdain. Additionally, regional communities are still waiting for their specific lifestyles to get reflected in our works.

It is a matter of satisfaction that our writers are willing to learn and grow. They are emerging from all sorts of professions and backgrounds, and are coming from all age groups and genders to write in ways that capture the imagination of readers both here and abroad. Bemoaning the lack of good Pakistani literature written in English in this day and age just shows a shocking disconnect with reality.

The reviewer is an editor of English course books at OUP. She tweets: @anumshaharyar

STELLAR SUCCESSES AND BROKEN DREAMS

In the face of insurmountable odds like state regulation, bans and limited funding, Pakistani filmmakers continue the attempt to realise their potential — just like their pioneering predecessors did in the early days after 1947, states FAHAD NAVEED.

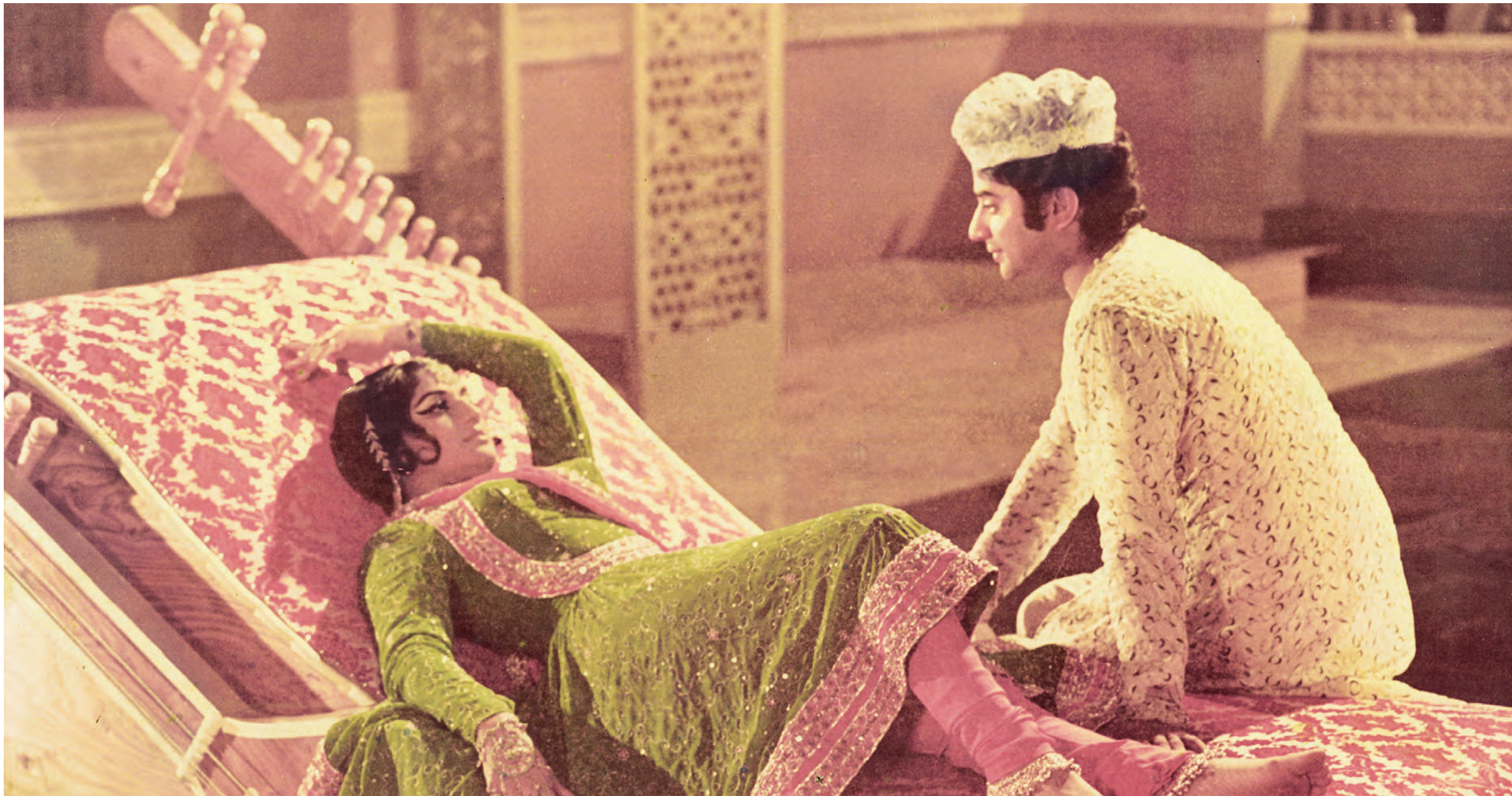


Photo: White Star

Film actors Rani and Shahid in the culminating film of director Hasan Tariq's trilogy, which was a 1972 blockbuster produced in Lahore and adapted from the novel Umrao Jaan Ada by Mirza Hadi Ruswa written in 1899.

IN a scene in the 1977 film *Aaina*, protagonist Iqbal's (Nadeem) motorcycle breaks down when he and his wife Najma (Shabnam) are heading to a party. They happen to be in front of Karachi's Bambino cinema when our hero attempts to kick-start his motorcycle. The sign of another cinema, Lyric, can also be seen in the background. When the motorcycle refuses to co-operate, the couple decides to take a taxi instead.

Class conflict is at the heart of this film. The scene playing out in front of cinemas is, thus, a fitting choice (or, more likely, a happy accident). Cinema, after all, was considered the great leveller at the time. Before multiplexes, which alienate certain audiences, single-screen theatres, such as Bambino, attracted people from different walks of life. They may have sat on different levels, but they watched the same film together and shared a rare communal experience.

Aaina went on to become a smashing success, setting a box office record that was not broken until the late 1990s.

Over four decades later, the Saddar strip we see in the film has completely transformed. Lyric is no longer around, and there is no trace of many other single-screen cinemas that were torn down to make way for shopping malls and other commercial buildings.

The single screens that still stand are struggling. The last straw for some came in September 2012, when multiple cinemas in Karachi and Peshawar were horrifically set on fire by angry mobs. Bambino was one of the cinemas targeted. While Bambino eventually reopened, it was barely hanging on and has practically remained closed since the Covid pandemic. Nishat, another historic cinema that was torched, did not survive the blaze.

The history of cinema in Pakistan is full of ups and

downs. Unfortunately, the lows outnumber the highs. Much has been written about the golden age, decline and the so-called revival — or rebirth — of the industry. But these linear retellings often look at the past with rose-tinted glasses. In truth, even during the 'golden age', the odds were stacked against filmmaking in the country. And filmmakers then had to fight uphill battles, much like the filmmakers of today.

ACT I: CHALLENGING BEGINNINGS

"Pakistan's share of everything is meagre," Saadat Hasan Manto wrote in an essay on Pakistani films, originally published in Urdu daily *Imroze* under the editorship of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and translated and republished in Ali Nobil Ahmad and Ali Khan's *Film and Cinephilia in Pakistan* (2020). "The industry is practically non-existent, its future unclear," Manto said.

"Government support was never there to begin with and nor will it be in times to come. Perhaps the reason the government does not give the plight of films much attention is because it faces many other complicated problems, which need to be fixed as a priority."

Over seven decades later, Manto's words continue to ring true. The country is still facing 'unprecedented' challenges, and cinema, and the arts in general, still rank low on the list of priorities.

This has been the case since the creation of Pakistan. In his book, *Pakistani Cinema 1947-1997* (Second edition, 2019), Mushtaq Gazdar — introduced by I.A. Rehman as the "pioneering film historian of Pakistan" — writes that after Partition, the Pakistani film industry was too small to cope with demand. "Unrestricted imports of

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THE NOSTALGIC GOLDEN YEARS OF TELEVISION

The characters and drama serials broadcast on PTV are now part of our national lore, recalls RIZWANA NAQVI.

NOVEMBER 26, 1964, is a memorable day in the history of broadcasting in Pakistan. It is the day when the first television transmission was aired in the country. Aslam Azhar was the first managing director of Pakistab Television (PTV), and the first station was set up at Lahore, which was followed by one in Dhaka a month later, in Rawalpindi and Islamabad in 1965, and Karachi in 1966. Peshawar and Quetta centres were added in the mid-1970s.

Growing up in the 1970s and the 1980s, PTV was the main source of entertainment for almost the entire nation. The transmission would start at a fixed time in the evening and would come to a close around midnight. During that limited time, everybody would find something or the other; even children would schedule their studies in a way so they could watch cartoons or any other interesting programme aired for them.

We are now able to watch dramas 24/7 but during the early days only one drama was telecast each day, between 8pm and 9pm, usually of 50-minute duration with fixed two short breaks — no repeat telecast. So if someone missed an episode, one would have to ask others what happened or wait for a whole week for the next episode and try to make sense from the two-minute recap at the beginning. The dramas would usually be of 13 episodes, or at the most 26. The broadcasting stations took turns; on one day, a production by Lahore would go on air and the next it would be Karachi's turn and so on.

MEMORABLE PRODUCTIONS

Nobody can forget plays like *Khuda Ki Basti*, *Shehzori*, *Uncle Urfi*, *Waris*, *Kiran Kahani*, *Dhoop Kinarya*, *Tanhaian*, and *Angan Terha*, to name just a few, that were penned by writers like Haseena Moin, An-



Photos: Dawn Archives

Some of those who captivated audiences for long include (clockwise) Roohi Bano, Shakeel, Talat Hussain, Abid Ali and Uzma Gilani.

war Maqsood, Noorul Huda Shah, Ishtiaq Ahmed, Bano Qudsia and Kamal Ahmed Rizvi, to name just a few. The mere mention of these plays brings to our minds actors like Nilofer Abbasi, Shakeel, Roohi Bano, Talat Hussain, Begum Khursheed Mirza, Arshe Munir, Jamshed Ansari, Irfan Khoosat and Uzma Gillani, to name just a few!

What made these plays memorable was their overall production, their theme and treatment of various subjects. They not only gave good entertainment, as well as value for time, but also gave a glimpse of society at large. We saw glimpses of family life, mannerisms and etiquettes.

On the one hand, we saw the struggle of feudal families to maintain their lands and the inter-family tussles, as in *Waris*, while on the other, we met ambitious Zara of *Tanhaian* trying to get back her father's house through sheer hard work, and Dr Zoya of *Dhoop Kinarya* the soft, kind doctor who loved children. Some of the plays were so interesting that roads would be deserted at the time they were aired as people would stay home to watch them.

Dramas, however, were not the only main attraction. Many quiz shows have been aired but none matches the calibre of *Kasauti* with Quraish Pur as the host

and Iftikhar Arif and Obaidullah Baig as experts. Comedy shows, such as *Fifty-Fifty*, *Such Gup*, *Studio Dhai*, *Uncle Sargam*, *Alif Noon*, etc. provided entertainment to the whole family with a pinch of salt. *Ainak Wala Jin*, though meant for children, was watched by one and all as it combined reality with science fiction and magic, and had some sort of moral lesson for children about what is right and what is wrong.

Tariq Aziz's opening greeting *Dekhti ankhoon aur suntay kanon ko Tariq Aziz ka Salam* still rings in the ears whenever his name or that of his show, *Neelam Ghar*, is mentioned. It was probably the longest-running stage show of its kind and the precursor of present-day stage shows that run on many channels.

WINDOW TO THE WORLD

In the absence of YouTube, Netflix, etc, television was the best source of English movies, especially for those who did not own a VCR or preferred not to go to the cinema. Besides movies, we regularly watched series, such as *Six Million Dollar Man*, *Bionic Woman*, *CHiPs*, *Little House on the Prairie*, *Full House*, etc. One programme that I never wanted to miss was the ever-popular *Mind Your Language* — a perfect antidote for the gloomy mind even today. If one is feeling low for some reason, just go on YouTube and watch a few episodes and refresh your mind.

Though comparison is not intended here, the soft, subtle and subtle style of newscasters, such as Mahpara Safdar, Zubair Ahmed, Shaista Zaid and others of the days of yore is so much in contrast with the present-day style of delivering news that one cannot help but mention it.

With time, changes in policies regarding broadcast and content were noticeable, especially after nationalisation. Though usually subtle, one that raised voices was

the move to make all female anchors and newscasters cover their heads during the Ziaul Haq era. Those who didn't agree found themselves in a situation that they thought it better to leave; a prominent example is that of Mehtab Akbar Rashdi.

SWITCH TO COLOUR

Along with entertaining and informing its viewers, PTV continued to grow over the years. The transmission switched over from its original black-and-white to colour in 1976. In the late 1980s, PTV's morning transmission was started; initially, it was for a few hours each day, but soon became a 24-hour transmission.

In 1990, the first semi-government TV network in the country, People's Television Network (PTN), was launched, which was renamed Shalimar Television Network (STN) in 1991. It started from Islamabad, followed by Karachi and Lahore. By the mid-1990s, however, the network had spread to the whole country. Network Television Marketing (NTM) came as a breath of fresh air to Pakistani viewers due to its innovative programming, but went off air in 1999 due to financial losses.

A second channel, PTV-2, was started in 1992 and was renamed PTV World in 1998. It was also the first-ever satellite channel of Pakistan. PTV Network launched a full-scale satellite broadcast service in 1991-92.

In 2000, private TV channels were allowed to operate and even telecast their news and current affairs content. Today, a plethora of channels, including some in regional languages, are available. It is altogether different world. We have surely come a long way!

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THE STORY OF PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

ARSHAD MAHMOOD relates the story of how a rousing piece of music became an exquisite musical gem.

THE national anthem of Pakistan is an exquisitely composed musical arrangement, and this has generally been acknowledged internationally. After going through the archival documents related to the national anthem, it becomes increasingly apparent that any contemporary controversies that existed at the time were with respect to the language and lyrics that were eventually used, never with respect to its musical composition.

Before the National Anthem Committee was formed in December 1948 and tasked with the job of finding a suitable tune and lyrics for the anthem, the Ministry of Interior, Information and Broadcasting, through a public announcement, had invited artists to send in creative proposals for the anthem's music and lyrics. An award of Rs5,000 was offered for each of the winning submissions.

The anthem committee, under the Chairmanship of Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar, had among its members Abdus Sattar Pirzada, Chaudhry Nazir Ahmed, Rajkumar Chakravarty, Abul Asar Hafeez Jallundhri, A.D. Azhar, Z.A. Bokhari, Jasimuddin and S.M. Ikram.

The committee received a sizable number of entries, which compelled it to form two further sub-committees — one to review the 'words' of the anthem and another to review the proposed 'tunes'. For a thorough assessment of all the submissions, area experts were co-opted into the two sub-committees. After the required due diligence and assessment of the tunes, the committee did not consider any musical entries for the composition as 'satisfactory'.

The committee, meanwhile, came under pressure. A foreign head of state was to visit Pakistan soon, and the need to unfurl the national anthem became critical. Ahmed Ghulam Ali Chagla, a member of the tunes sub-committee, was requested to compose the national anthem in consultation with Pirzada, who at the time was the minister for food and agriculture. Chagla was assisted in his endeavours by the Navy Brass Band.

Chagla's musical composition was played before Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan and a few members of the National Anthem Committee. As a result, Chagla's composition was selected to be played on the occasion of the Shah of Iran's visit in March 1950. The same composition was also played on the occasion of the prime minister's visit to the United States later that year.

The National Anthem Committee subsequently formally approved the musical composition as the national anthem on August 10, 1950.

Although an anthem is considered a musical work to be sung, it cannot be considered a 'song'. A song may be sung by a single vocalist, but the general requirement for an anthem is that it be sung by a choir. The musical structure of a national anthem has its own qualities and characteristics: it is required to have an inimitable musicality because it must be ageless, invigorating and even militaristic.

The melody selected for our national anthem possesses all the attributes which such a work would normally be required to display. The composer ensured that all the desired characteristics of an anthem were embedded in his composition.



Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah examining the musical notation manuscript proposal for the musical composition of the national anthem, possibly the one composed by Ahmed Ghulam Ali Chagla, who was later chosen after Mr Jinnah's death to compose the national anthem by Premier Liaquat Ali Khan as part of a high-powered committee. This photograph was taken on February 21, 1948, during the inspection of an anti-aircraft regiment in Malir, Karachi. (Courtesy: Zarreen Baqir Collection)

The national anthem score was originally written for a brass band, but it is worth noting that all the instruments used in the musical rendering, except the drums, were primarily wind instruments. In order to attain the desired musical effect, Chagla designed an extensive and detailed musical arrangement. The parts every musical instrument was to play in the new composite national anthem were clearly written and notated. Each notation sheet was individually signed by Chagla, the composer. A copy of this original score is available in the state archives. One wonders if the original manuscript of the score is also preserved in the National Archives.

Looking carefully at the notation sheets, it is apparent that only one person has written all the sheets for each instrument. One would do well to remember that minute care needs to be taken when writing notation sheets

for each instrument because they need to be expressed in the internationally accepted transpositions for every instrument.

Our national anthem is written in the B-flat key, which is also a two-flat scale. The choice of this key signature was appropriate because the composer was aware that it needed to be sung by a choir, which would consist of both male and female voices. The B-flat scale (in *desi* terminology, the *panchwan kala*) is a note (*sur*) equally suitable for both male and female voices.

The structural form in which our national anthem is composed is referred to in technical musical terms as 'ternary'. The ternary structure is a musical movement in three sections or parts. The first part is in the major mode, the second part is in the minor mode, and the third is once again in the major mode. The first line of

the melody in the first and third parts are similar, but the orchestral arrangement in the third part is significantly different from that of the first part. The third part is dynamically grandiose and signifies the climax of the national anthem.

There are three significant features that make the musical score for Pakistan's national anthem exceptional. First, it is musically designed for four voice types — soprano, alto, tenor and bass. Second, the composition contains all the ingredients to make it sound somewhat like a hymn, because the parts written for woodwind instruments may with relative ease be sung by a choir. It is apparent when you have a closer look at the sheets of parts to be played by clarinets, namely 1st, 2nd and 3rd, that although the notes played by the three groups are different, the rhythmic structure of each bar for all three parts is identical, so in all three parts, the words for the anthem fit very well. When these three parts are sung together it becomes a hymn.

The third significant feature of the anthem is that the parts written for brass instruments, including drums, make it both militaristic and invigorating. Though it is designed to be played in a brass band ensemble, it can easily be transposed to a larger symphony orchestra.

Thus, in spite of the brevity of our national anthem, which has a duration of only 80 seconds, its musical impact is comprehensive, majestic and quite magnificent.

The national anthem has a unique place in the context of our musical heritage. Chagla surely deserves to be acknowledged and honoured by the conferment on him of a posthumous Nishan-i-Pakistan in the 75th year of Pakistan's statehood.

After the approval of the musical score, it took the national anthem committee almost four years of deliberation to finalise the words. The most significant aspect of for the lyrics of an anthem is that they should convey the unique characteristics of the relevant country it represents, yet it needs to have the quality of being ageless. It should be a prayer for the wellbeing of the people and the country. It should be uplifting. The biggest challenge for poets who were tasked to write the lyrics was to find words both suitable and meaningful which would fit well with the melodic and rhythmic structure of the approved tune.

The words written by Hafeez Jallundhri were eventually selected, and rightly so, because they fitted exceedingly well with the musical composition. Not many people know that Jallundhri, an acclaimed poet, also had a deep understanding of music. He followed the musical structure to find fitting and meaningful words, with the result that what he wrote did not fall into any conventional formulations of Urdu poetry or *beher*s, which represent the poetic codes.

Departures from such codes and formulations notwithstanding, what Jallundhri wrote was a befitting formulation of lyrics for Chagla's outstanding musical composition. That is the remarkable story of the making of Pakistan's national anthem.

The writer is a famed music composer.

OUR EXTRAORDINARY MUSIC MAKERS

ARSHAD MAHMOOD discusses the evolution of Pakistani music over seven decades and how, following the migration of classical gharanas to Pakistan, the new film industry, and subsequently state-sponsored radio and TV, helped generate a major demand for Pakistani music.

SOUTH Asia has a rich musical tradition that stretches back over a thousand years. The subcontinent's musicians have played an important role in the overall cultural development of the region.

The music of Pakistan evolved out of the broader musical traditions of the northern parts of South Asia, a region that runs from Afghanistan in the west to Bengal in the east and includes parts of central India, such as Gwalior and Indore. A closer look at these older musical traditions provides key insights into the origins of Pakistani music.

Long before Partition, there were several important centres of artistic activity in the subcontinent that fostered the development of distinct musical traditions. Several of the princely states during the colonial era, for example, enjoyed a degree of political and cultural autonomy and their rulers were known for taking pride in the conservation of their musical heritage. They consequently supported local musicians by providing them with the facilities they needed to further develop their skills. Furthermore, they organised grand *baithaks* at their residences and invited renowned *ustads* to regale select audiences with their talent.

Musical performances in the pre-Partition era frequently gravitated towards princely courts, the shrines of Sufi saints, seasonal festivals, marriage ceremonies and vocational activities. Events such as these provided artists exposure to large audiences as well as opportunities to earn income. Furthermore, the prospect of financial reward and added fame gave future generations an incentive to work within and build on the musical traditions of their forebears. Musical knowledge was almost invariably passed down within families and *shagirds* of a renowned musician — *gharanas* — and the process of retention and enrichment of tradition continued down from one generation to another.

At times annual festivals or music conferences were organised where performances were staged over several days. One such festival was the Hari Vallabh Sangeet Festival in the city of Jalandhar, which was initiated 147 years ago and continues to date.

GHARANAS GROW NEW ROOTS

The existence of an environment conducive to the development of music in the pre-Partition era ensured that once Pakistan was created, there was a sizeable pool of artists who moved to the new country and laid the foundations for the enrichment of music here. The champions of some of the prominent *gharanas* who moved to Pakistan were from Patiala, Sham Chaurasi, Gwalior, Kirana, and '*Qawwal Bachon ka Gharana*', or the Delhi *gharana*. Many artists practising semi-classical, qawwali and folk music also chose to stay on in or migrate to Pakistan.

It is widely acknowledged that it was *gernail* Ali Baksh Khan and *karnail* Fateh Ali Khan who popularised the Patiala tradition of classical *gaiki* and brought it acclaim across the subcontinent. Ustad Ali Baksh was the grandfather of Ustad Amanat Ali Khan, Ustad Fateh Ali Khan and Hamid Ali Khan.



From Mehdi Hasan (clockwise) to Madam Noor Jehan, Roshan Ara Begum and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Pakistan has had voices to be proud of.

The younger members of the family are still engaged within the musical profession.

The founding of the Gwalior *gharana* in Pakistan was due to the efforts of Ustad Banney Khan whose disciples travelled across the subcontinent, and even further afield to Afghanistan. Ustad's son Piyare Khan was the grandfather of Ustad Fateh Ali Khan and Hameed Ali Khan, the prominent classical vocalists from Hyderabad. Ustad Piyare Khan was drawn to Sindh due to the landowning elite's predisposition towards classical music and due to the enthusiastic response from aspiring *shagirds* in Sindh who were clustered around him.

The Sham Chaurasi *gharana* was represented in Pakistan by an outstanding performer, Ustad Salamat



Photos: Dawn Archives

Ali Khan, and his elder brother, Ustad Nazakat Ali Khan. The first classical programme of the two brothers was broadcast on All-India Radio in 1942 when Salamat Ali Khan was aged only eight. The sons of Salamat and Nazakat continue to create music today.

Malika-i-Mousiqi Roshan Ara Begum learnt her craft from Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, a widely respected guru who was the leading proponent of the Kirana *gharana*. Roshan Ara Begum excelled in her craft as a classical vocalist. Whichever ragas she chose to perform were invariably considered definitive renditions, inviting respect and acclaim from her peers and by leading musicologists on both sides of the border.

The Delhi *gharana* is believed to have been formed

by Hazrat Ameer Khusrau in the 13th century when he galvanised the new *khayal gaiki* and *qawwali*. Almost all the *gharanas* renowned for the *dhrupad* style of classical singing were, according to oral traditions over several generations, introduced to *khayal gaiki* by an ustad from the Delhi *gharana*. The classical vocalist Ustad Ramzan Khan, the renowned sarangi player Bundu Khan, and more recently Ustad Sami, also a classical vocalist, represented the *gharana* in Pakistan. Additionally, almost all the prominent *qawwals* in Pakistan today belong to the Delhi *gharana*, including Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Ghulam Farid and Maqbool Sabri, Farid Ayaz and Abu Mohammad, to name a few.

Unfortunately, classical music has been to wane in Pakistan over the last several decades since the holding of musical performances and classical *baithaks* has declined sharply. There remain, however, two non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that have played an important role in the promotion of classical music: the All Pakistan Music Conference and the Tehzeeb Foundation. However, this can hardly be considered adequate if classical music is to survive in the country.

As a first step towards revitalising the culture, the state should sponsor at least two concerts a month in order to promote classical music and its remaining practitioners. This is a somewhat modest demand, considering that symphony orchestras all around the world survive largely because of governments that consider the preservation of classical traditions as an imperative for the intellectual and aesthetic survival of their cultures.

Qawwali has fared significantly better in the last few years compared to classical music, with new groups emerging, thanks largely to the way in which *qawwali* groups have harnessed the power of social media.

THE FILMI SCENE

In the late 19th and early 20th century, a new channel for popularising classical music emerged in the world of theatre. Agha Hashr Kashmiri's plays, for example, required the inclusion of an accomplished music ensemble as part of his theatrical group. All actors selected for parts in a play were expected to be proficient in singing — especially the lead actors. This unique structure of Agha Hashr's plays was to be adopted by filmmakers in the 20th century as a widely accepted standard format for the flourishing film industry. Such a structure guaranteed a significant role for music; there were at least eight songs featured in every film produced. This led to the creation of new musical forms that continued to dominate the musical landscape for years to come.

For almost three decades after Partition, outstanding melodies were created in Pakistan, many of which continue to resonate in the minds of the people. In fact, a highly popular musical platform recently initiated by a well-known beverage company attests to the resonance of the music produced between the 1950s and the 1970s as a vast part of

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A ROBUST CULTURAL MOSAIC

An assortment of cultural interventions by the state, the flag-bearers of religion, and modernist forces have enabled Pakistani culture to evolve a mosaic of distinctive and contrasting features, writes JAVED JABBAR.

CULTURE, society, state: the three heads need to be separately stated, but the first two are synergistic, or even synonymous. And, within such confluence is also the conflict within and among the three. In 75 years, Pakistan has journeyed through its own exclusive experience of the extremities — and the moderation — of all three. The most basic and also comprehensive scope of culture is in the organic dimension.

In a forever-churning melting pot, memories, myths, traditions, present strivings, future aspirations of people; all these blend ethnicity, geography, heritage, climate, livelihoods, lifestyles, population growth, migration, media, technology, trade and the impact of external influences into a brew that cannot be conclusively cooked or manipulated. The totality of culture is beyond clinical complete control, except in extremely totalitarian states, which Pakistan has never been, despite phases of both military intervention and civilian despotism.

A TREASURED HISTORY

At the time of independence, the West Wing of the awkwardly constructed state connected Pakistanis with 7,500 years of civilisation, commencing in Mehrgarh and then later Mohenjodaro. Both sites indicated interactions with distant locations, signs of a society accustomed to interaction with cultures different from its own.

In the East Wing, a thousand miles distant, Mahastangarh in Bogra district revealed beginnings between 700BC and 300BC as part of the far-flung Maurya Empire, also indicative of being open to contact with other cultures.

The title of Ian Stephen's fine 1964 book *Old Country; New Nation* captured Pakistan's unique character of fusing time, distance, similarity and diversity. Inward mass migration between August 1947 and about 1949, hugely so in the West Wing, added potent new streams to an already rich canvas. While being predominantly Muslim, both the wings had vast ethnic and linguistic variety.

In East Pakistan, over 90pc ethnically homogeneous Bengali people had numerous sub-communities. Urdu-speaking Biharis maintained their own distinct persona. Even the small non-Bengali indigenous population comprised a variety of Tibeto-Burman, Chakma, Marmas and others. The post-1971 Pakistan comprises Punjabis, Pakhtuns, Baloch, Brahvi, Sindhis, Seraikis, Urdu-speakers, Gujarati-speakers, Baltis, Chitralis, Gilgitis and others, and contain within themselves multiple sub-castes, tribes, *bi-raadaris*. Over 70 languages and dozens of dialects can be heard around the country today.

TWO PHASES OF AGE

Comprising beautiful diversity, spontaneity, even anarchy, the evolution of over 75 years has to be divided into two broad phases. The first 24 years, 1947-1971, of the original state. The next 50 years, 1972-2022, of the residual, renewed state. In both phases the long history of territory, combined with new immigration, has shaped identity.

In the first 24 years, good intent to make the two wings coalesce culturally collided with elitist arrogance, political myopia and military missteps. For 14 years, from 1956 to 1970, there was also the (eventually failed) attempt in the West Wing to impose a structural uniformity over the provinces through a One Unit system. Unwisely, this sought to bypass the cultural diversity of regions and provinces, even as it established the parity principle between the wings.

In the next 50 years, notwithstanding current strains in 2022, and the regressive phase of Gen Ziaul Haq's rule, 1977-1988, there have occurred refreshing attempts to learn from history, to respect autonomy, to devolve power, to celebrate cultural diversity.

From a conceptual viewpoint, with the goal of consciously attempting to guide and control Pakistani culture, three perspectives have exerted, with varying degrees of success, discernible impact on culture and society. All three have remained simultaneous, each occupying its own space, each attempting to enlarge its reach.

The first is the statist approach, followed by the religion-based approach, and the modernist, which does not necessarily reject parts of the other two but which, compared to the others, is far more open-minded towards new knowledge, new options.

THE STATIST APPROACH

The statist approach, though sincerely motivated, is generally unable to accept that diversity — and dissent — can strengthen both society and state. This model initially sought to apply the mechanisms of governance and the apparatus of administration to compel enormous variety into singularity.

Faced with relentless hostility from day one, of both India and Afghanistan, the new nation had to ensure security and stability for sheer survival, which required internal harmony. But this could also be misinterpreted as requiring uniformity. Thus came attempts through forums such as the Bureau of National Integration in the 1960s to stress similarity and solidarity, and to downplay diversity and pluralism.

Earlier, it took about seven years to undo the damage done in March 1948 by denying Bengali the status of a state language. That misjudgement only highlighted the thin line between political decisions and cultural injustice, initiating ripples that sometime turned into tidal waves.

In the first two decades, Radio Pakistan, broadcasting in Bangla, Urdu and in other languages, introduced mass awareness of the new national, cultural identity of becoming Pakistani, without each listener necessarily appreciating all the nuances and connotations of the new persona. There was hope that this new name and phase would mark the start of a yet-unknown but enticing part of life. In the entertainment realm, dozens of Urdu movies were produced in Dhaka. East Pakistan gifted the country with the immense talent of singers in Urdu, like Firdousi Begum, the

wide filmic appeal in West Pakistan of actors like Shabnam and Rahman, of music composers like Robin Ghosh.

The statist approach was also capable, after the tragic disintegration, of injecting new vigour, of arousing new confidence. In popular music, songs like *Sohni Dharti* and later *Jeevay, Jeevay*, promoted by state media expressed the unspoken desire to put behind profound pain and make a new beginning. There was the irony of such songs being rendered by gifted vocalists, like Shahnaz Begum and Runa and Dina Laila, all of whom were of East Pakistani and then Bangladeshi origin.

Belatedly but fittingly, Faiz Ahmed Faiz was invited to contribute to pluralist cultural policymaking. New entities such as the Pakistan National Council of the Arts and Lok Virsa, as also several other forums both at the federal and provincial levels commenced work to conduct research, to catalogue and document heritage.

With July 1977 there began about 11 years of a near-reversal in the constructive statist approach. The blatant use of Islam by the military regime to mask personal greed for power bred an unprecedented social obscurantism. The persecution of journalists, intellectuals and outspoken women, their exclusion from state electronic media and the deliberate promotion of showy religiosity repressed the potential for healthy, continued cultural growth.

Curiously, in the 1980s, Pakistani state TV drama serials and satirical shows, like *Fifty Fifty*, achieved excellence of content applauded in, of all the places, India. Prime minister Mohammad Khan Junejo did attempt to change the regressive direction of the statist approach between March 1985 and May 1988. With Zia's death in August 1988, the advent of Benazir Bhutto held out the promise that the world's first Muslim woman prime minister would light up the darkness. Through the next nine years, alternating with Nawaz Sharif, that promise was partly fulfilled.

THE MUSHARRAF IMPACT

Through yet another irony, it took an unelected military leader in the person of Gen Pervez Musharraf, who was diametrically opposite in personal cultural terms to Zia, to authentically invigorate a relatively liberal, forward-looking statist approach to culture and the media. Through substantial increase in reserved seats for women in all legislatures, through the introduction of private electronic media in March 2002, through measures such as the creation of the National Academy of Performing Arts in Karachi in 2005, the state showed that it can be a positive catalyst for cultural development. In the past 13 years since his exit, all civil governments have retained the thrust of those reforms, give or take a few changes.

One other outcome of the statist approach to culture arose from the economic sphere. The past two decades have seen the phenomenal expansion of a new multi-level middle class in both rural and urban areas,

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A PERSPECTIVE ON PAKISTANI ARCHITECTURE

Pakistan's built spaces have transformed over the years to better reflect the aspirations of its upwardly-mobile social classes. There are pitfalls that must be avoided for building spaces in the future, stresses DR NOMAN AHMED.

IT is an established fact that architectural outputs are one of the most vocal and pronounced features amongst all environmental ingredients, mainly due to their dimensional magnitude and instant impact on the human mind.

Notably, the degree of excellence is directly dependent upon several factors that affect architectural development during the process. It also requires a considerable amount of professional acumen and institutional arrangement to develop a built environment that has the right blend of design finesse and utilitarian merit.

It is interesting that some of the best edifices developed in Pakistan belong to the pre-independence era. The Sindh High Court, Mohatta Palace, Sindh Assembly, KMC Head Office, the KPT building in Karachi, Punjab Assembly, GPO and Lahore Museum in Lahore, and countless other heritage buildings are a reminder of the unrivalled design excellence and functional quality acquired many decades ago.

Recent times have marked many changes and brought new dimensions to the architectural fabric of the country. Corporate head offices are a distinct addition to the built environment. Karachi has witnessed their growth correspondingly. The head office of Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) on main Sir Shah Suleman Road was a dominant structure designed and supervised by the late Habib Fida Ali. In his simple, straight-lined yet ornate approach, he designed the exterior in fair face concrete. The elegant grey cement appearance provides a weatherproof effect, which makes the building not only efficient but also contextually relevant. The intelligent use of glass enhances the optimum use of daylight, making the building energy efficient.

The Faisal Bank Building on Sir Abdullah Haroon Road, by another eminent architect, Yasmeen Lari, made a fine addition to the city architecture. Aesthetically balanced use of granite and glass has given the assemblage a smart appearance. MCB Towers by Arshad Shahid Abdulla comprises a balance of glass fenestration and industrialised panels with subtle grooves and niches. The building acts as a dominating edifice of its kind.

The skyline in Karachi and other prominent cities is being added upon by corporate structures, most of which possess design inputs of reasonably sound quality. In Lahore, the foremost addition is the Allama Iqbal International Airport complex. Designed and supervised by Nespak, it has added a worthwhile edifice which shall remain the gateway to the historic Mughal town for times to come.

Mixed responses have been received about the new Islamabad Airport. Whereas it is grand in scale and possesses a wide range of purpose-built transportation infrastructure for its connectivity, its overall aesthetic and functional performance leave many steps to be covered.

Besides the strength and vigour of the corporate sector, other influences also show in the buildings and spaces created in the recent past. Flexibilities in financial markets and new products in leasing/loaning have allowed large-scale real estate ventures to flourish. Many local and international realtors can also be found developing joint projects and ventures with their local counterparts. Sprawling, up-market real estate ventures abound in major Pakistani cities. The element of comfort is now facilitated by the use of multi-ranged technologies, gadgets and products.

The ideas and images related to the built environment are largely developed to show gloss and glamour, which has become the ultimate aspiration of all and sundry. However, the building solutions available for low-income groups are extremely limited and sub-evolved without the input of professionals. For this reason, we



The Mohatta Palace was constructed in 1927. Shiv Rattan Mohatta, a Marwari entrepreneur, commissioned a palatial house in the affluent seaside neighbourhood of Clifton. The architect commissioned for his palace, Ahmed Hussein Agha, was one of the first Muslim architects of India and had come from Jaipur to take up an assignment as chief surveyor for the Karachi Municipality. (Courtesy: White Star Photo)

find that the quality of life and the corresponding built environment for low-income groups is degrading fast. In Karachi, one finds many visible architectural developments in the above respect.

A significant trend is the patchwork of corporate spaces in existing buildings. In this phenomenon, corporate enterprises choose a portion of an existing building and transform it according to their requirements. Building interiors, partial external elevation, signage and décor, partial landscape and even invisible infrastructure are changed to suit corporate standards. Hundreds of buildings in Karachi and elsewhere in Pakistan have been given such partial facelifts. This approach has created melodramatic effects on the built fabric. One finds a shining, well-articulated and bright-looking built space in an otherwise shabby and run-down structure. In other words, the contrasts in input and appearance of buildings are too sharp to be ignored.

Automobile showrooms of very gaudy kinds are another visible trend that has consolidated itself during the past few years. Major arteries where the elite and upper-middle-income groups move have converted into outlets for glowing auto showrooms. Khalid Bin Waleed Road, Shahree Faisal, Rashid Minhas Road, Korangi Road and the New M.A. Jinnah Road in Karachi are a few examples where this phenomenon is visible. Similar trends are also found along the M-9 motorway.

Glass façade structures, outlandish building elements

and powerful illumination are a typical configuration of this mundane assemblage. The architects who have designed such structures have been pinned down by their demanding clients to increase the capacity and visibility of their merchandise. The trend is growing fast. As automobiles are being marketed and acquired with flexible conditions, car showrooms are likely to rise in number, though not in quality.

Condominiums and multi-storied apartment projects are also on the rise. Due to international partnerships, foreign entrepreneurs have brought their formulae and images for new avenues of luxuries and comforts corresponding to a global lifestyle. Exotic verdures, gymnasias, restaurants, fitness centres, swimming pools and clubhouses are a few of the ancillary spaces now routinely incorporated into real estate development projects. This rising trend has taken over prized locations, such as beachfronts, highway edges and affluent neighbourhoods. Ecological considerations are compromised against the prospective revenue gains.

The fact is that architects can be engaged in socially responsive approaches and practises through exposure and awareness attempts. Professional bodies may be sensitised to their social responsibility. Vocational training in building, surveying and construction-related trades must be up-scaled. Every profession possesses a 'para' category – paramedics, for instance. Architecture shall also benefit from para-architects if a properly de-

signed course and curriculum are imparted. The Technical Training Resource Centre (TTRC) in Karachi has successfully taken steps in this respect. After careful analysis, this model can be upscaled widely. The TTRC team was able to take cue from Dr Akhtar Hameed Khan's inspirational teachings and practical interventions in various low-income settlements in Karachi and elsewhere in the country.

Architecture in Pakistan, as elsewhere, is governed by numerous factors that have a direct bearing on societal dynamics. No worthwhile architectural project is approved that lacks commercial potential, especially in the short term. It simply follows the proverb 'all is well that sells well'. The attitudes and working relationships that exist between architects and their clients are fairly amorphous in nature. With the exception of established multinational corporations, enterprises and individuals of repute, the general clientele has not yet understood the material value of the design and execution service that an architect provides under a contractual agreement.

A myopic perception remains that architects charge ultra-high fees for a few criss-cross scribbles and doodles. Such a conception brews misunderstandings, ultimately resulting in the qualitative decline of architectural products.

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THE ONGOING CHALLENGE OF RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

After the denial of rights in the eastern wing of Pakistan, it was the turn of women and minorities during Ziaul Haq’s military rule. However, Pakistanis are a resilient people who have stood up for their rights through the decades, states ZOHRA YUSUF.



The growth of public floggings in the early years of President Ziaul Haq’s rule is best explained by Zia’s statement to the Foreign Policy Association in New York in December 1982. He stated that his country’s practice of flogging criminals “...is not a matter of degradation of a human being, but a matter of deterrence.” (Courtesy: White Star Photo)

ALL freedom movements have their roots in the aspiration for equal rights under a more equitable system than the one from which independence is sought. The popular uprising against the British colonists in India was, in fact, a rallying cry for people’s rights in a free country. Similar desires — and disillusion with the status quo — led to the Bengalis fighting for and creating an independent country in 1971, barely 25 years after they had struggled for Pakistan. During this period the denial of socio-economic, political and cultural rights to the majority of the people of the country cost Pakistan dearly. Few, if any, lessons have been learnt. Much has been written and discussed about the Quaid-i-Azam’s reasoning in demanding a separate country for Muslims and his ‘vision’ for Pakistan. Jinnah’s belief that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations had implications of ‘otherness’ — the proposition being that the two communities belonging to different faiths could not be expected to live together peacefully. Yet, the implications of the Two-Nation Theory in the new state clearly worried him to the extent that he made the oft-quoted speech on August 11, 1947. It appears that his fears of persecution of Muslims by the majority in undivided India were rekindled by the thoughts of similar oppression of minority communities by the Muslim majority in Pakistan. Many decades later, Aug 11 was declared the ‘Minorities Day’ by the PPP government. However, there could hardly be a more apt example of lip service paid to a commitment made. The harsh reality that faces us is that the status of all religious mi-

norities has steadily declined in Pakistan. Annual reports of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) as well as those compiled by other international organisations monitoring freedom of religion and belief confirm this truth with supporting data and records of incidents of discrimination and intolerance. Over the years, religion has been weaponised in the country to target opponents, personal or political. Laws have been amended to facilitate persecution.

INSTITUTIONALISED PERSECUTION

Although social discrimination has been fairly common in Pakistan, the institutionalisation of faith-based persecution was set in motion during the regime of Gen Ziaul Haq. In the name of Islamisation, he introduced laws and amendments to existing laws that targeted the most vulnerable segments of society — women and non-Muslims. The set of Hudood Ordinances of 1979 introduced punishments of whipping and amputation of hands — taking the violation of rights to another level. The Zina Ordinance became a weapon against women; its target often being the poorest and the weakest, including a near-blind girl, Safia, who could not identify her rapist. However, the amendments and additions brought into the blasphemy laws in the 1980s were the true harbingers of the dangers to be faced in the name of faith not only by non-Muslims, but by the Muslim majority as well. Through the amendments, Ahmadis were forbidden from propagating their faith or posing “as a Muslim” (which had a fairly wide description). While amendments in 1986 prescribed the death penalty for anyone defiling the Holy Prophet (PBUH), further

amendments in 1990 under instructions of the Federal Shariat Court made the death sentence mandatory. The status of the Ahmadis, who were already facing discrimination following the constitutional amendment in 1974 that declared them ‘non-Muslims’, became even more precarious following amendments brought about by Zia. Today, their places of worship, their graveyards — and, in fact, their lives — are not safe. Although more Muslims have been charged and convicted for blasphemy, in terms of population ratio Christians and Ahmadis head the count. It should be noted that while no one has been executed (in spite of being handed the death sentence), about 80 people have been killed on suspicion of blasphemy by lynch mobs or individuals. The more prominent include Punjab governor Salman Taseer, PPP minister Shahbaz Bhatti, Mardan University student Mashal Khan and, more recently, Sri Lankan national Priyantha Kumara in Sialkot. The acquittal of Asiya Bibi by the Supreme Court in October 2018 brought violent TLP protesters to the streets, while the burning to death of a Christian couple in a Punjab village in 2014 evoked little response. STUDENTS AS ACTIVISTS

The country’s first military dictator, Gen Ayub Khan, saw the press as his most potent adversary. The taking over of Pakistan’s leading newspapers, *The Pakistan Times* and *Imroze* and the imprisonment of their editors and journalists was an assault not just on the press but on people’s right to freedom of information and expression. While journalists waged their own battles, the strongest resistance to the regime perhaps came from students.

In the 1960s, even as students in Europe and the United States took to the barricades to protest against their governments and systems, students in Pakistan — in both wings — began to organise in the shape of unions that were progressive and challenged the military regime. It was, ultimately, a popular movement in which both East and West Pakistan participated and in which students played a determining role that brought down the government in 1969. In West Pakistan, students belonging to National Students Federation (NSF) were in the forefront, while, in East Pakistan, the Chhatra League, affiliated with the Awami League of Shaikh Mujib, became a potent force. It played an active role in the Bangladesh freedom movement as well. Zia banned students’ unions in Pakistan in 1984, leading to increase in violence on campuses. It is only in Sindh that this right to freedom of association was finally restored when the ban was lifted on students’ unions in February 2022. ORGANISED ACTIVISM

Under the set of Hudood Ordinances, the first sentence of death by stoning was announced in September 1981. Allah Baksh and Fehmida, who had eloped and married were charged and convicted of adultery. Allah Baksh was sentenced to death by stoning and Fehmida was awarded 100 lashes. It must be conceded that women’s rights groups had not paid much attention to the dangers of the Zina Ordinance till this harsh sentence was given. However, they were quick

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ACTIVISM UNDER FIRE

Civil society organisations have raised their voices in favour of minorities, women, workers, and the protection of community rights. In doing so, they are facing increasingly sharp criticism from both state and society today, warns HARRIS KHALIQUE.

PAKISTAN is grappling with three fundamental political challenges: how to strengthen democracy by attaining the supremacy of parliament over executive, particularly the military; how to run the country on the basis of constitutional federalism with equal stakes for all provinces and regions; and, how to build peaceful and mutually beneficial relationships with neighbouring countries. The three unresolved economic issues remain: warranting consistent economic growth with interests of working classes secured; overturning the severe export-import imbalance; and creating decent living conditions — employment, education, and health — for all. The three primary social problems we face are: eradicating gender disparity; ensuring protection, dignity and rights of religious minorities; and coping with widespread bigotry and intolerance in society. The thinking and construct of Pakistani civil society gets materialised within the ambit of the nine challenges cited above. The term ‘civil society’ is not as simple to understand as terms like ‘political party’, ‘business’, ‘government’, ‘media’, etc. There are two somewhat divergent but connected views on the concept. Antonio Gramsci said that a capitalist state has two overlapping spheres: ‘political society’, which uses force, and ‘civil society’, which creates consent to further certain interests and norms.

Today, the international financial institutions and most Western academia define ‘civil society’ in managerial terms as the ‘third sector’, distinct from government and business, comprising non-governmental organisations (NGOs), labour unions, professional associations and faith-based groups. Over the years, particularly after the fall of the Soviet Union, many civil society organisations struggled to get space for themselves while consenting with the hegemony of the established order of their respective societies. In Pakistan, there was a rich history of labour unions from pre-Partition days. Until the early 1980s, unions thrived as the industrial sector grew. Later on, factors like elitist legal and judicial environment, systematic de-industrialisation, lack of implementation of labour regulations, and introduction of contractual labour has brought down the figure of unionised labour in Pakistan to the tune of only 2pc. For the 98pc, there is neither any collective bargaining agency nor does that possibility exist in many trades. Farmers spread all over have a weak organisational capacity. Students are prohibited from unionising. Professional associations of doctors, engineers, accountants or the likes have interests limited to safeguarding their financial health as communities of practice. However, Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) and Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) have expanded their mandates to lobby for

certain fundamental rights. Most faith groups formed by the majority faith have either an antagonistic relationship with minority faiths or an ambition to capture political power. There are only a few among them who believe in creating a discourse based on interaction and dialogue. In contrast, most minority faith groups in Pakistan work closely with the NGO sector. Consequently, it is the community development and human rights organisations, a few think tanks, and charitable foundations or trusts that constitute the bulk of the functioning civil society in Pakistan. Primarily, these are NGO. In a broader sense they are now termed civil society organisations (CSOs), dealing with either the provision of basic services, or focussing on clusters of villages or neighbourhoods, or training and, in some cases, providing credit line to communities, or furthering the cause of civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights through research, policy advocacy and campaigning, or prioritising social development and progressive legislation at the policy level. In terms of their effectiveness in Pakistani society, CSOs have left a lot to be desired. As far as political issues are concerned, the number of organisations working on democratisation of political space is small. The promotion of peace with neighbours has

come to a halt because the security policy of the state discourages such initiatives. In terms of economic wellbeing of the people, CSOs could only provide sustenance to communities they work with, rather than eliminating poverty as a whole. Their coverage is by no means large, leave alone being universal. The unchecked population growth has hindered sustainable development, and a fragile economy imposes its own limitations. Charitable service providers are respected widely, but their outreach in limited. When it comes to social issues, no doubt CSOs have successfully highlighted the concerns surrounding women and minority rights and problems faced by other excluded groups. But even after CSOs having influenced major policies and legislation in some areas, the larger society has become more radicalised than ever. Due to perpetual negative propaganda of state organs, coupled with critique of both the religious right and the political left, the credibility of CSOs among the masses has been harmed. Ironically, they are also branded ‘foreign-funded’ in a country whose government and state apparatus itself relies heavily on foreign funding, loans and aid. Such is life!

The writer is a poet and author. He is currently the Secretary-General of the HRCP.

FOUNDING MOTHERS TO AURAT MARCH

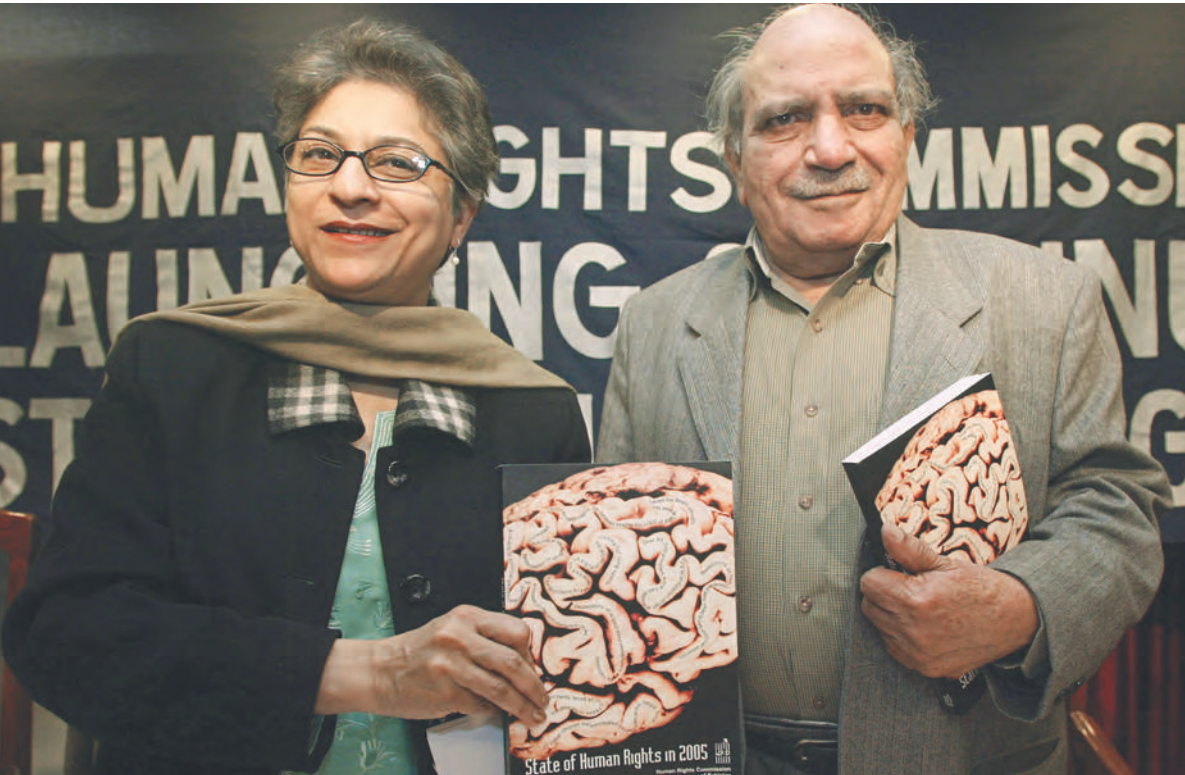
The struggle for equality in the battle for women’s rights persists today against entrenched mindsets. From the violent street battles of the Zia years, we are now witnessing the attempt to pass pro-women laws in parliament, writes NAZIHA SYED ALI.



Miss Fatima Jinnah was by the Quaid-i-Azam’s side throughout the movement for the formation of Pakistan. The above picture is probably taken in the 1930s in one of the summer retreats of Mr Jinnah outside Mumbai. (Courtesy: National Archives)



An arms drill demonstration by the Pakistan Women’s National Guard before their commander Begum Rana Liaquat Ali Khan and the Shah of Iran during a state visit to Pakistan in March 1950.



Through their leadership and commitment, Asma Jahangir and I.A. Rehman deservedly became the face of the rights movement in the country.



Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau walks with Pakistani Nobel Peace laureate Malala Yousafzai in the Hall of Honour on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, on April 12, 2017.

THE seed for the women’s rights movement in Pakistan was sown decades before August 14, 1947, in that other epic struggle for rights, the freedom movement against the British Raj. In 1917, Bi Amma, the redoubtable mother of Muslim Leaguers Shaukat Ali and Mohammed Ali Jauhar, made history when, clad in a burqa, she addressed the annual meeting of the then all-male League in place of her younger son who had been arrested by the British. She went a step further in 1921 when she cast aside her veil while speaking at a mass meeting in Lahore. Both acts symbolised how exceptional times call for new thinking; in this case for women to step out of the confines of their homes and participate fully in momentous political events of the time.

And women repeatedly demonstrated they were equal to the task, taking out demonstrations, facing tear gas and beatings, courting arrest, and going to jail. The civil disobedience movement in 1947 even galvanised women in what at the time was the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). That year, Pakhtun women marched unveiled in a procession, something unheard of in that conservative social milieu. The presence of Fatima Jinnah, standing shoulder to shoulder with her brother and president of the Muslim League, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, was reflective of women’s equal participation in the campaign for a separate homeland. Nevertheless, women’s rights in the new nation would be achieved piecemeal, as a result of campaigning inside the assemblies and on the streets, and progress was far from linear.

Post-1947, nation-building activities saw women take on a more traditional, welfare-oriented role although they continued to push the envelope. Led by Begum Ra’ana Liaquat Ali Khan, some of them formed a women’s voluntary service to assist and help rehabilitate the exodus of refugees. But the wife of Pakistan’s first prime minister also took the initiative to set up the Pakistan Women’s National Guard and the Pakistan Women’s Naval Reserve, programmes under which women were given military training. In an address to the PWNG, Begum Ra’ana said: “[T]his is not the time for the 40 million women of Pakistan to sit quietly in their homes.” However, the concept was too far ahead of its time. Photographs in the local press of the National Guard women marching with heads uncovered and being trained by men attracted public censure, especially from the clergy, and both programmes were discontinued in the mid 1950s.

APWA’S ROLE

The women’s voluntary service, meanwhile, was the precursor to the All-Pakistan Women’s Association (APWA) set up on Feb 22, 1949, with Begum Ra’ana as its founder president. APWA, comprising mainly women from the elite class, led the way in setting up girls’ schools and colleges and industrial homes where income-generating skills were imparted to lower-income women. It also had a women’s rights and legal aid section, and the first legislation enacted to protect women in marriage, the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance (MFLO) 1961, was a direct result of APWA’s campaigning.

“The MFLO did not come out of the blue,” says former chairperson, National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Khawar Mumtaz. “Women, under the banner of United Front for Women’s Rights that included members of APWA, came out to protest the second

marriage of then prime minister Mohammed Ali Bogra. They demanded that family laws be codified, and second marriage be banned or at least restricted. That is what led to the formation of a commission headed by Justice Mian Abdur Rasheed which drafted the MFLO.”

TRAILBLAZING LAWMAKERS

Pakistan’s first legislature had only two women representatives, Begum Jahanara Shah Nawaz and Begum Shaista Ikramullah, who kept up the pressure to promote women’s rights despite the misogyny they repeatedly encountered. As recounted in the book *Women of Pakistan: Two Steps Forward One Step Back* by Khawar Mumtaz and Farida Shaheed, in the Zakat committee of the first Constituent Assembly, “the ulema refused to sit with [them], arguing that only burqa-clad women over 50 should be allowed to sit in the Assembly”.

It was on account of agitation by the early female legislators, including from the Punjab Assembly, that the Muslim Personal Law of Shariat 1948 was passed which recognised women’s right to inherit property, including agricultural land; the issue had very nearly been put on the back burner.

Even Gen Ayub Khan’s military regime, although it had supported the APWA-led demand for regulating Muslim marriage laws, did not include women in the decision-making process and there were only six female legislators in the assemblies, all indirectly elected on reserved seats. The sham that was the government’s liberal façade was clearly exposed by its blatantly misogynistic campaign against Fatima Jinnah when she stood as a candidate against the general for the 1965 presidential election.

CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS

Perhaps for the first time in the country, which was shortly to lose its East Wing, the run-up to the 1970 elections saw mass mobilisation of women across all socioeconomic classes. The Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), whose manifesto promised women equal rights, reached out directly to them both as voters and campaigners. The unanimous adoption of the 1973 Constitution during Zulfikar Ali Bhutto’s government, according to which women were deemed equal under the law, was a landmark. Opportunities for women opened up, including in the civil services.

Women also began to join the workforce in droves, especially in the burgeoning cotton textile mills. As Sheema Kermani, founder of women’s rights organisation Tehrik-e-Niswan, puts it: “Bhutto’s *roti, kapra aur makaan* rhetoric and façade of a people’s movement helped change the social environment and encourage female labour.”

ENTER ZIA

For a time, it seemed nothing could stop the upward trajectory. Then came Gen Ziaul Haq. The military dictator’s ‘Islamisation’ drive led to a perceptible shift in social attitudes. In 1979, the Hudood Ordinances were passed, and just two years later, in 1981, its implications became clear when a court sentenced Fehmida and Allah Bux for fornication under the provisions of the law. That lit the spark for women to rise up and demand their rights in feminist terms not collectively expressed until then.

“Early women’s rights activists believed in reform, they didn’t believe in structural changes,” says Anis Ha-

roon, member of the National Commission for Human Rights and former chairperson NCSW. “Unlike the older women of APWA, for us it was an issue of rights, and not welfare only. We believed that as long as the structure was the same, nothing would change.”

The platform for the resistance was the Women’s Action Forum (WAF). Zohra Yusuf, former chairperson Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), recalls the day WAF came into being one afternoon in September 1981 at the home of Aban Marker, a co-founder of Shirkat Gah, who had called the meeting after news of the sentence that was handed down to the young couple. “There were about 25 to 30 women at the first meeting. There was a lot of passion, the mood was very angry and we were all determined to do something.” A number of organisations joined WAF over time, including the Sindhiani Tehreek based in rural Sindh.

Gen Zia’s government sought to marginalise women in public life and to reduce them to second-class citizens through a slew of discriminatory legislation, including, among others, the Law of Evidence. Hundreds of women at any given time languished in prisons across the country on charges of *zina* brought by vengeful ex-spouses or families under the Hudood laws. More and more women came out on the streets openly challenging not only the military regime’s misogynistic laws, but also the subversion of the democratic system and the banning of all political activities.

On Feb 15, 1983, the state unleashed its might on some 400 women protesting against the Law of Evidence in Lahore. Police rained blows on them with their batons, and tear gas shells were lobbed at them. Several women were injured. Ms Mumtaz and her 12-year-old daughter were among the 50 people arrested. “We were taken to the Police Lines thana where those arrested were in high spirits ... we raised slogans, sang, wrote a statement and released it,” she recalls. It was a watershed event that catapulted the women’s rights issue, and WAF, onto the national stage.

‘WESTERNISED WOMEN’

The conservative media painted the activists as ‘westernised women’ who were not to be taken seriously. But several of them, such as Najma Babar, Najma Sadeque and Ms Yusuf, were themselves journalists. The latter was at the time editing the weekend edition of *The Star* evening. “Earlier it was an entertainment rag, but I turned it into a more political magazine and it became a platform for women’s rights. In fact, my editor Mansuri Sahab was one day called in by the management who complained I was turning it into a feminist paper! But he was totally supportive.” In fact, the movement had many male supporters among the journalist and legal communities who also protested alongside the women.

The status quo continued through the civilian governments of Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif. She never had the required two-thirds majority to overturn the Hudood Ordinances, and Mr Sharif’s party, the PML-N, was itself very conservative and few concessions were given to women during its years in government. Indeed, his habit as PM of visiting female rape victims to show ‘solidarity’ with them, all in full view of the cameras, showed total insensitivity to the trauma of rape.

MUSLIM WORLD’S FIRST WOMAN PM

Having a woman as prime minister, the very first one in the Islamic world — even one tiptoeing on

eggshells around right-wing political forces and the power brokers in uniform — was a tremendous boost for women emerging from the bruising Zia decade.

The atmosphere also became less stifling in the years following. Ms Kermani’s Tehrik-e-Niswan was one of the pioneers of using the performing arts to effect change. “When we first started, it was very difficult to get girls from lower-middle-class families to participate,” she says. Later, however, it became easier to obtain families’ consent to their daughters becoming part of the group’s creative endeavours.

MUSHARRAF’S CHANGES

Ironically it took another military dictator, Gen Pervez Musharraf, to bring about a significant revision of the Hudood Ordinances, when he signed into law the Women Protection Act, 2006, which separated rape (*zina bil jabr*) from adultery/fornication (*zina*), moved them to the penal code and also made it difficult to abuse the *zina* provisions.

In the years since, much pro-women legislation has been passed, especially during the PPP government’s 2008-13 tenure when it had cross-party support from women members; building such a consensus appears highly unlikely in today’s polarised atmosphere. There are now on the statute books laws to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace, forced marriage, acid crime, etc. as well as legislation to strengthen laws against honour killing and rape. All the provinces have by now passed domestic violence laws, some more watered down than others, but implementation is either non-existent or proceeding at a snail’s pace.

Commissions on the status of women exist on the national and provincial levels, but are handicapped by bureaucratic meddling, inadequate and inconsistent funding, and delays in appointment of members and chairpersons. Suffice to say, the road ahead is long, especially given the shift towards conservative values.

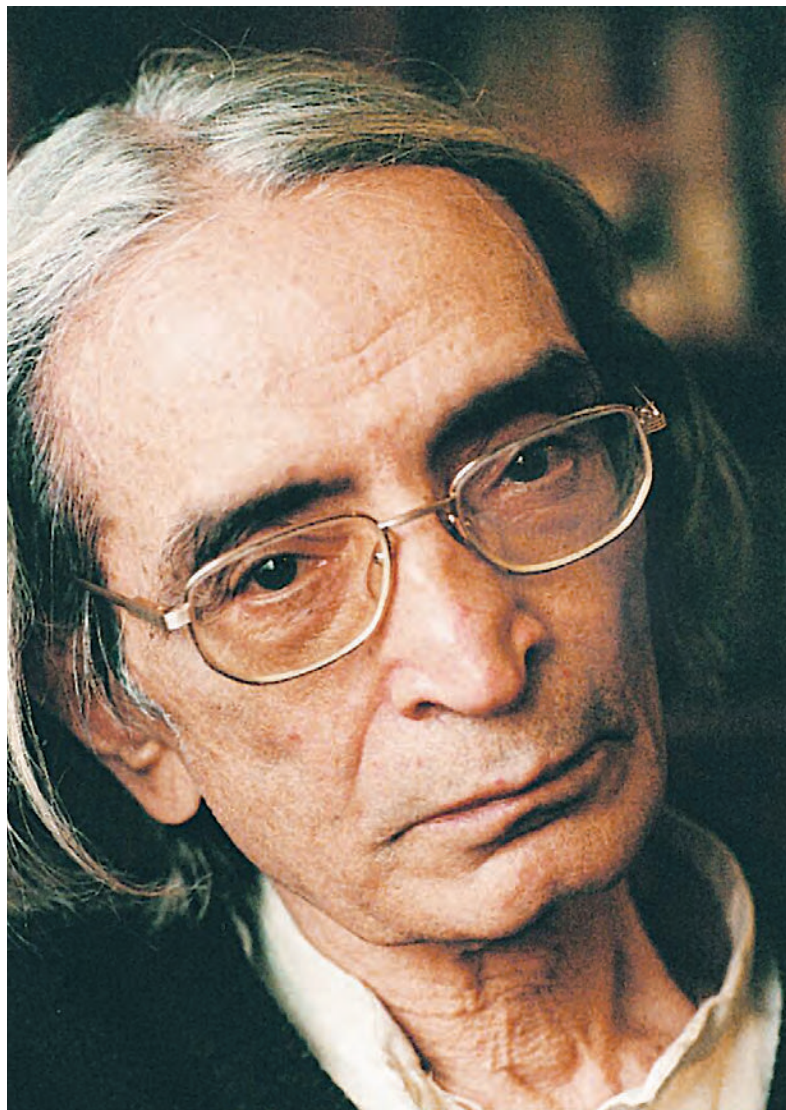
In its latest phase, the most visible manifestation of the movement is Aurat March. The annual event to commemorate International Women’s Day on March 8 is unapologetic in its demands for a more equitable social construct and refuses to be cowed down by threats from right-wing elements. “As far as personal rights are concerned, the younger generation has much more confidence and clarity,” says Ms Haroon. “I remember in early WAF discussions for the platform’s charter some members weren’t comfortable with including a line about women having rights over their bodies, although eventually they agreed.”

Nevertheless, there is an arc connecting women’s rights activists of today with their pre-partition forebears. “The days have gone when Punjab’s Muslim women were considered fit only for cooking food and minding children. It is now essential for them to take an equal share of responsibility with their menfolk in the field of politics,” said Lady Maratib Ali, wife of a prominent businessman, in 1942. Even decades later, as the ‘controversy’ sparked by some of the slogans at the Aurat March illustrates, nothing triggers the conservative lobby’s deepest insecurities than women breaking out of their gendered roles.

The writer is member of staff.

WHO IS AFRAID OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA?

Freedom of the press has been consistently violated by both military and civilian-led governments, making a free press today a receding dream, declares MAZHAR ABBAS.



Photos: Dawn Archives

The late Zamir Niazi (left), trailblazing author and activist on press rights and freedoms, has rightly been described as the “conscience of the free press in Pakistan.” Seen on the right is former PFUJ president Ahfazur Rehman falling to the ground as police baton-charge journalists and media workers during a protest organised in Karachi for freedom of the press.

PAKISTAN lost its democratic direction soon after its birth. If one goes through the events from 1947 to 1958, it is not difficult to reach the conclusion that freedom of the press had been among the first casualties after the death of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. The Constitution was another, followed by the judiciary.

The dream of Quaid’s Pakistan ended with the first martial law, imposed months after the sitting army chief at the time was made the defence minister as well. That appointment, in the words of former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Lt-Gen Hameed Gul, was the original sin in the history of military intervention in Pakistan’s politics.

Roedad Khan, who belonged to the first batch that was inducted into the Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP), disclosed to me recently that subsequent governments “always wanted to control the press. That was one of the reasons why black colonial laws were retained”.

Journalist and author, the late Asrar Ahmad, in his book *Walls Have Ears* wrote about how the English weekly *Freedom*, published jointly by M.H. Syed, the former private secretary of Quaid-i-Azam, and Yusuf Afghan, a columnist from Karachi, had greatly irked the administration. The then administrator, Syed Hashim Raza, ordered that all of the weekly’s content be submitted for scrutiny and approval to the district magistrate before publication.

Constant pressure was exerted on the press in the early years of Pakistan through ‘press advisories’, colonial laws and other coercive measures. Whether it was Jinnah’s historic first address to the Constituent Assembly on Aug 11, 1947, or the questions regarding the fitness of the ambulance in which Jinnah was taken to hospital in Karachi, or the assassination of prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan, the press could not report events in any way other than the official versions of the event.

Jinnah himself had been strongly against press curbs. He had not signed the Public Safety Act as he feared it would be used against the press. It only became law after his death, and was followed by dozens of other anti-press laws. With them, the bureaucracy started controlling the press with a classic carrot-and-stick approach.

The government, through the Ministry of Information, controlled advertisements and used them to bargain with newspaper owners. Most of the latter became organs of the state and turned the press into

a commercial industry. Pakistani media houses were never allowed to grow enough to become the eyes and the ears of the people. Instead, most of them became mouthpieces of successive governments. In the process, we lost both our freedom as well as our independence.

A respected editor of his time, the late S. Manzarul Hasan, once said: “The process of curbing the freedom of the press began soon after the creation of Pakistan. The proprietors who started publishing newspapers after independence had no concept of the relationship between the press and the government in a free country. For them, publishing a newspaper was an industry. And to make this enterprise profitable, they needed government help and patronage. The government was too happy to treat it as an industry. In return for this help and patronage, the proprietors surrendered the freedom of the press.”

Whatever happened in the first 10 years of our national life was repeated in the next 10; till 1968 The first martial law brought the press under government control through a new law, the reviled Press and Publication Ordinance (PPO), 1960, and its amended version of 1963. Through these laws, the government took control of Progressive Papers Ltd and other media enterprises, and brought reputable papers, like *Pakistan Times*, *Morning News*, *Mashriq* and *Imroz*, under its thumb.

The travails of Pakistani media did not end in the third decade. If anything, they became worse as the overall situation grew worse. The 1970-71 crisis in East Pakistan was never reported as it should have been journalistically speaking. Either out of fear of the state, or out of their own judgement, no media house presented a picture close to the reality of what was happening in the East Wing.

The hopes that things will improve under the country’s first elected government, under prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, soon stood shattered. Bhutto had promised greater freedoms, but he retained the black laws, and used other laws, like Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, against journalists. Quite a few publications, both newspapers and weeklies, were banned.

Midway through the third decade, the country’s third martial law, under Gen Ziaul Haq, was a true nightmare for the press. For the first time, journalists, in addition to being put behind the bars, were also flogged in public.

Zia’s Information Secretary, the late Lt-Gen Mujeeb Rehman, had so much power in his hand that

even after Mohammad Khan Junejo was elected prime minister in 1985, he censored a line from the prime minister’s inaugural speech, in which he had said, “Democracy and Martial Law cannot go together.” When Junejo came to know about the omission, he summoned Gen Mujeeb, confronted him, and promptly sacked him.

Junejo not only abolished the PPO, but also allowed civil liberties. The press got some freedom, but till then, most newspaper owners had already capitulated, wishing to keep their commercial interests above press freedoms.

The fourth military takeover, led by Gen Pervez Musharraf, was unlike the draconian periods of Ayub and Zia. He did not come down hard on the media even in his initial years. Subsequently he opened up space for private television channels, believing that in the post-Kargil period, India had won the war of narratives through its media.

A DIVIDED HOUSE

Today, the national media, including print, electronic and digital, is a divided house beset with all kinds of challenges; from direct threats and intimidation, to a crisis of credibility arising from a constant decline in professionalism.

People in the profession are often heard wondering rhetorically as the sheer inability of a government to put restrictions ‘in the age of satellite and internet’. Yet, in the last 10 years, nearly a thousand notices have been issued by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) to private television channels for one reason or the other. I personally have copies of 600 such notices. Many channels have been taken off air for one reason or the other; journalists have gone missing, some have been killed, and the voice of dissent is something that is no longer acceptable.

While the future of professional media is uncertain, the social media, with its own dimensions and attractions is an entirely different proposition. Any individual with a smartphone considers himself better informed than everyone else. Whether the information getting disseminated is factually correct or not is the least of anyone’s concern.

We have now fully entered the era of fake news where disinformation is sometimes the only information available. It has taken the country by storm. Gone are the days of professional journalism, when old-tim-

ers would admonish us to, “Get the news first, but first get it right.”

Author of four books on journalism, the late Zamir Niazi, once said: “This is not the age of mass media education, but of mass media disinformation and misinformation. The [media] owners are ready to spend millions on machines and technology, but are not prepared to spare even a few thousand on training the people behind the machine.” That is a bit more true today.

MODERN-DAY CHALLENGES

A new era of democracy has given some relief to the media, but the famed ‘hidden hands’ continue to monitor and target journalists. In the last 13 years of uninterrupted democracy, nearly 50 journalists have been killed. Some regressively anti-media laws, like the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca), 2016, have also been passed.

Not only journalists, but rights activists and bloggers, particularly those critical of state policy, have become Peca’s prime target. This law is still intact and is being used to harass journalists.

Jinnah, during a speech in 1936, had raised his voice against the Indian Press (Emergency) Act of 1931, due to which newspapers had ceased publication. The issue was a speech made by Pandit K.K. Malaviya, which a paper had reproduced.

Jinnah argued: “The freedom of speech gives me a right to publish it and that I am not punishable ... We have complete freedom to make any speech that we like, express any opinion we like, and we are not liable to any action outside by any court, civil or criminal ... it is the privilege of the newspaper to have the proceedings published and so long as they are true, fair and faithful, it is not liable to any action.”

We are nowhere near Jinnah’s vision regarding freedom of expression and independence of media. We could never find the direction we lost soon after independence. Cracks have now clearly appeared on the pillars of the state. The fourth of those pillars, too, cannot stay immune to the happenings around it. Though it has grown in size, it has gradually lost its credibility.

There is, thus, an urgent need to revisit the foundations of Pakistani journalism. Freedom is, and must remain, our cherished destiny because, without it, one can neither have true democracy nor the rule of law.

The writer, among other things, is a media historian.

THE UNSTOPPABLE RISE OF TROLL FARMS

Our political parties love to champion free speech as long as they are in the opposition. When in power, however, stresses FARIEHA AZIZ, each of the major parties has advanced laws to quell dissent.

A little over a decade ago, dismissiveness was not an uncommon response when activists would warn against the blocking of websites as a policy issue. The connection of that warning to ad hoc, arbitrary and unlawful executive action and violation of fundamental rights — especially free expression and right to information — was not instant. Social media was viewed as an adversary: a platform lacking both regulation and editorial control, a place of unverified information, abuse and harassment.

When the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca), 2016, was first introduced as a bill, many in policy circles and even within mainstream media were of the view that regulation of social media was necessary. While critics of the law pointed towards the dangers of excessive criminalisation of speech and powers for law-enforcers, the traditional response was that ‘something’ was needed. That ‘something’ metastasised into a potent silencing tool in the hands of the state, exactly as predicted.

Curbing obscenity, blasphemy, harassment, hate speech and ‘fake news’ — otherwise appropriately distinguished as disinformation and misinformation — has been used by successive governments as a ruse to introduce regressive legislation and regulation intended to control political discourse. YouTube was banned for three years when the PPP was in power. The PML-N introduced Peca. The PTI notified the so-

cial media rules and the Peca Ordinance, expanding existing restrictions and empowering the authorities further. Over the years, various reports have pointed to the acquisition of filtering and surveillance technology. A recent proposal by the PTA now seeks to restrict the flow of Internet traffic in Pakistan by forcing it through local instead of global DNS.

In 2022, more value is being attached to free expression, right to information and the right to do business online. This is more pronounced in public discourse. There is less apologia and more unequivocal condemnation by political parties and the journalist community towards measures to control social media through regressive legislation, regulations and their implementation. The public reactions drive and swift legal challenges to the bans on PUBG and TikTok, as well as against social media rules and Peca Ordinance, are proof of this. But getting here has been a steep learning curve.

While greater connectivity and adoption of social media platforms has contributed to its relevance, denial of mainstream space to otherwise mainstream actors due to censorship, as witnessed between 2017 and 2022, left them with no option but to turn to social media to establish their political relevance and utility.

When weekly columns by regular columnists were dropped by newspapers, the censored content was featured on Medium or put out through the authors’

Twitter accounts. When prime time anchors were sacked from their jobs, they established YouTube channels. When politicians became persona non grata on television, their press conferences and political rallies barred from mainstream coverage, they turned to live streaming on social media to keep themselves relevant and connected to their support base.

Vlogs and YouTube channels have now become the go-to sources for hot takes on current affairs: for perspectives that are otherwise inaccessible. It is in this environment that the PML-N chief opted for Zoom to address party workers, and the recently ousted PTI chief took to Twitter Spaces and podcasts to propel his narrative. Mainstream news outlets are now reliant on promoting their content on social media, where much of the discourse and narrative-building is taking place. Political satire thrives through memes, GIFs, WhatsApp stickers and TikTok videos.

Over time, the state’s relationship with social media has changed too. Rather than suspending services on every occasion or initiating cases through proxies, occupying the same platforms and manipulating discourse on them is now part of the new modus operandi. From the PM to the ISPR head, they all have to keep an active profile on social media, particularly Twitter. This where the war of narratives if fought and won; or lost.

The PTI was always more social media savvy, and it has worked for it. The irony is that while in govern-

ment the party launched the Digital Pakistan initiative to promote a ‘positive’ image of the country, but its ministers and supporters were portraying a negative image of themselves on Twitter!

In this era of ‘fifth generation warfare’, a phrase popularised by a former ISPR head, the bolstering of one’s own narrative is done by drowning out and targeting the views of others in a game of patriot-versus-traitor binary.

Two statements, issued in 2020 by women journalists, pointed to the gendered nature of abuse on social media; a culture popularised by the PTI, but prevalent in every political party. Targeted campaigns are launched against critics, especially journalists, attacking their character, discrediting them as peddlers of ‘fake news’ or accusing them of being on the payroll of political opponents and foreign entities.

Social media presence comes at a cost. Disappearances, detentions and arrests of bloggers, activists, journalists, political workers for their social media posts have been a regular feature since 2017. Journalists and activists are always collateral in power games played by the state and political parties. In this age of social media, the stakes are only higher.

The writer is co-founder and director of Bolo Bhi, an advocacy forum for digital rights.

WHY HAVE THE WORKERS FAILED TO UNITE?

Pakistan’s trade unions remain relevant to our future, especially as times get tougher. But their failure to unite reflects poorly on their ability to focus on common goals for workers, argues ZEENAT HISHAM.



Photo: Dawn Archives

Sound and fury signifying nothing ... that is what be trade union movement in Pakistan has come down to with the passage of time.

TRADER unions invariably grow from the political system in a country. The structural nature of a country’s political system deeply influences trade union membership, coverage and impact. Primarily, it is the internal political system of a country that gives or curtails space to trade unions to either institutionalise and become stronger, or remain fragmented and marginalised. The impact of external, or global, factors is secondary, though crucial.

In Pakistan, trade unions were never granted the space to institutionalise and were kept away from political institutions. The downhill trajectory of trade unions in Pakistan since 1947 is generally attributed to three decades of military regimes. However, according to labour historians, the seeds of neglect and disregard of labour interests were manifest in the ideology of the All-India Muslim League (AIML) in the pre-Independence era. After Independence, the ruling elite steered development policies towards growth via capital formation, rather than by laying the foundation of a welfare state. Hence, neither land reforms nor dynamic trade unionism saw the light of the day in the country.

The roots of trade unionism in the subcontinent date back to the labour movement that emerged in the late 19th century, when industrialisation took off under British colonial rule. The Bombay Mill-Hands Association, formed in 1890, was the first informal labour organisation. In 1918, the Madras Labour Union, the first conventional trade union, was formed. The first trade union federation, the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), formed in 1920, was affiliated with the Indian National Congress as the labour movement, and was deeply intertwined with the anti-colonialism movement. In contrast, the AIML did not develop a concrete vision or programme concerning labour, and never really encourage the workers to organise themselves.

After Partition, Pakistan inherited only 9pc of the industrial base of undivided India. There were 55 registered trade unions in Sindh and Punjab, and 30 in East Pakistan. The unions were mostly in the railways, post and telegraph, dockyards and cotton mills. Divided on political ideology, the unions with leftist leanings formed the Pakistan Trade Union Federation (PTUF), while the rest formed the Pakistan Labour Federation (PLF) and the East Pakistan Federation of Labour along the lines of the Indian Federation of Labour.

By 1950, the number of trade unions had increased to 251 when the state created the All-Pakistan Confederation of Labour (Apcol) to check the growth of left-leaning unions. Over the decades, trade union federations splintered or merged many times over, or formed anew.

In subsequent decades, the state focussed on actively keeping the labour unions away from mainstream politics and development discourse,

with duplicity of words and actions regarding organised labour remaining prominent.

Keeping a façade of its professed concern, the state in 1951-52 ratified two International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions crucial to trade unionism; the right to unionise, and the right to collective bargaining. However, of the six labour policies formulated in 75 years — three under military regimes (1959, 1969, 2002) and three under elected governments (1955, 1972, 2010) — none was ever implemented. The provinces of Sindh, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced their first labour policies in 2018, but no follow-up ever came to light.

For labour legislation, the rulers, both military and elected, resorted to the colonial legislative framework. The first damaging law of the early days was the Pakistan Essential Services (Maintenance) Act of 1952. Based on a colonial war-time measure, the Act deprived workers of the rights to organise and collective bargaining in federal government services and any industries declared to be public utility services. As trade unions existed mostly in the public sector, this law weakened the nascent labour movement.

The two other laws concessional to labour — the Trade Union Act, 1926, and the Industrial Dispute Act, 1947 — were amended several times and finally replaced with the regressive Industrial Relations Ordinance (IRO), 1969, which took away the right of freedom of association and collective bargaining from a vast category of workers and prohibited industry-wide unions. This law was not changed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, whose governance, according to a historian, “only brought to new heights the familiar mix of labour concessions and repression that characterise Pakistani labour history”.

IRO 1969 was replaced with IRO 2002 by Gen Pervez Musharraf, and then reshaped by the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) government into the Industrial Relations Act (IRA), 2008, both retaining most of the restrictive clauses.

After the 18th Amendment to the Constitution devolved labour, it was thought that the provinces would get rid of the colonial framework and bring about legislative reforms. This did not happen. Instead, according to trade unions and labour activists, there are more complications than was the case earlier.

Provincial industrial relations laws remain by and large exclusionary. Only Sindh granted freedom to form associations and collective bargaining to workers in agriculture in 2013, and made the rules of business in 2021. Keeping in view the feudal character of agriculture, it appears unlikely that workers would form trade unions to claim their rights.

The federal government, meanwhile, failed to formulate a broader national legislative labour framework based on constitutional rights and

ILO standards to harmonise labour laws across the provinces.

A critical challenge to the trade unions since the 1990s has been the globalisation of the economy, which has pushed millions of workers into contractual employment and out of the ambit of industrial relations laws. Meanwhile, corporations’ resistance to workers organising and bargaining collectively has become endemic.

A 2016 ILO study cited the number of registered trade unions in Pakistan as 7,096, out of which only 1,390 were collective bargaining agents (CBAs). Union density was 2.32pc of the total labour force; 15 trade union federations and 28 industrial trade union federations were registered with the relevant body.

The challenges trade unions confront internally are numerous. Lack of education and skills among the majority of workers, hence lack of an educated cadre, vulnerability due to economic hardships, and fissiparous tendencies in society are serious constraints that have obstructed the labour movement.

Lack of emergence of a younger leadership in trade unions is another issue. The old guards who represent workers in national tripartite mechanisms and international forums do not let go of their seats. The most damaging weakness is the trade unions’ non-acceptance of informal workers into their fold.

Trade unions in the formal sector are male-dominated in terms of both membership and leadership. The negligible presence of women in trade unions is due to parochial and patronising attitudes of the traditional trade unionists who see women only as home-makers and not as wage-earners. This is despite the fact that an increasing number of women are joining factories and offices. The number of home-based women workers is much larger.

In 2021, Pakistan was ranked as one of the worst countries in the world to work in, according to the International Trade Union Confederation Global Rights Index, which rated 149 countries on a 1-5 scale based on the degree of respect for workers’ rights. Pakistan got a rating of 5 (No Guarantee of Rights), indicating that while the legislation spells out certain rights, workers have effectively no access to these rights.

Despite these political-institutional challenges, internal weaknesses, constraints and repercussions of neoliberal policies and globalisation, trade unions are still relevant to Pakistan, rather more so during these turbulent times. Trade unions must innovate and revitalise to resist inequities, play an active role in addressing the impact of emerging issues on the workers, such as climate change and pandemics, and strive to build a just and fair world of work.

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GIVING HOME TO A NATION’S DREAMS. CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE.

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AN ABJECT CONFUSION IN SLOGANEERING

The All-India Muslim League, while electioneering in Muslim-majority areas, promised that religion would play a central role in Pakistan. NADEEM F. PARACHA argues that the party had no such plans. Pakistanis have since struggled to reconcile the party's words and intentions.

To understand Pakistan's many modern-day contradictions — especially the complicated relationship between religion and the state — it is important to understand how the common citizen's perspectives were shaped in the years leading to Partition. Some promises were made that were never kept, and some promises were made that were never meant to be kept. The distrust between the state and its people is not a new phenomenon, as would show the couple of real-life incidents narrated here.

My paternal grandfather often told a story about how the people of his ancestral town in northern Punjab responded when some activists of the All-India Muslim League (AIML) visited the area during the campaigning phase of the 1946 provincial elections in British India. Our ancestral town, Makhad, is 160km from Rawalpindi.

My grandfather was in his late 20s in 1946, and worked with his father, who was a trader. He was well-versed in Indian politics, but a majority of the people in the town had little or no idea. They hardly ventured outside the town. So, when the AIML campaigners arrived and asked them to vote for the party, so that the party leader, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, could form an independent Muslim-majority country, some of the townsfolk were not sure exactly who they were talking about.

According to my grandfather, the people of the town had heard names like Jinnah, Gandhi and Nehru, but they were not particularly interested in them. The townsfolk knew more about the Unionist Party (UP), which at the time was Punjab's largest political party. Its members were the people who actually mattered when it came to addressing the economic and social issues having an impact on the lives of the town's residents. That being so, the attempt to persuade the locals to vote for the League failed.

Punjab was a Muslim-majority region. Approximately 51pc of its population was Muslim. Sindh, East Bengal, Balochistan and the erstwhile NWFP (present-day KP) also had Muslim majorities. But AIML's support base largely lay in Muslim-minority regions of India where the Congress Party was strong. According to Dr Muhammad Waseem (in *Political Conflict in Pakistan*, 2022) and French political scientist Christophe Jaffrelot (in *The Pakistan Paradox*, 2015), the AIML struggled to locate support for itself in India's Muslim-majority regions.

These regions were self-contained with their own culture, language and politics. What is more, even their understanding of Islam somewhat differed from each other. For example, Bengali-Muslims, and those in the NWFP, found themselves to be 'different' from Punjabi-Muslims. The case between Sindh and Punjab had its own undertones.

The locals wondered why the people of Muslim-majority regions will vote for a party that had become a vehicle of Muslims living in Hindu-majority regions, and who had the most to gain from a separate Muslim-majority country? It was a tussle between, say, majority-Muslims and minority-Muslims.

According to the economist Shahid Javed Burki (in *State and Society in Pakistan*, reprint 2019), by the 1940s, the AIML had become the party of urban middle-and-lower-middle-income Muslims residing in Hindu-majority regions. They had to compete for economic resources with Hindu majorities. But the situation was slightly different for the Muslims of Muslim-majority regions. They were already residing in areas where they were in a majority: what would Pakistan offer them that would be different?

When the AIML posse failed in its mission to convince the townsfolk of Makhad to vote for the party, another group of AIML workers arrived. The first group had consisted of young men belonging to the party's student wing. Their message revolved around the importance of 'Muslim unity' and the economic benefits of having a separate Muslim-majority country.

The AIML was led by 'modernists' who had ad-



Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan exhorts the Muslim League National Guard and Aligarh University volunteers in Lahore in 1944 to campaign actively for the Muslim League in the 1945 general elections. (Courtesy: National Archive)

opted Islam, not as a theocratic-political doctrine, but as an identity marker to differentiate India's Muslims from the region's Hindu majority. The party did not reject the long history that the Muslims shared with the Hindus, but they added to this a history that the Muslims of India shared with Arabia and Persia as well.

The second group of AIML workers that arrived were led by a cleric. They came to meet the famous Pir of Makhad. The Pir was from a long line of Sufi personalities that had come to Makhad in the 17th century and settled there. Jinnah had instructed the party to win the support of Punjab's spiritual leaders who exercised great influence in rural areas. So the AIML's message was tweaked to fire the imagination of the rural folk of the province.

After meeting the Pir, the cleric leading the League team told the townsfolk that Jinnah was committed to the creation of an Islamic state that would be driven by Shariah laws, and that the new state would be transformed into a caliphate. He also attacked the Unionist Party for being 'in league' with the Hindus and the Sikhs, who, he said, wanted to crush Punjab's Muslims. Similar accusations were levelled against even the Islamist parties that were opposing the League for having 'a secular approach'.

My grandfather would chuckle and say that the cleric painted Jinnah in such a manner that the townsfolk started to imagine the secular barrister as an Islamic sage with a flowing white beard. AIML's strategy in the Punjab worked. In the urban areas, the call for Muslim Unity was hammered, whereas the campaigning in rural Punjab was left to the right-wingers.

Thus, Pakistan was achieved on the back of a somewhat schizophrenic meta-narrative. One side of the narrative treated Islam as a faith that was inherently progressive, democratic and flexible enough to adopt 20th century modernity. The other side of the same narrative explained Pakistan as a bastion of Islam that was to evolve into becoming an Islamic State ruled by Shariah laws. However,

the other side was almost immediately curbed when Jinnah, as the country's first governor-general, stated that Pakistan was not to be a theocracy.

One of the slogans used during AIML's election campaign in Punjab in 1946 was *Pakistan ka matlab kya; La Ilaha Illallah*. It was derived from a 1944 poem by Asghar Sodai, a young man from Sialkot. This had become a popular slogan in Punjab, so much so that just days before the creation of Pakistan, a man during a Muslim League session in Karachi asked Jinnah, "Sir, you promised us '*Pakistan ka matlab kya, La Ilaha Illallah*' ..." Irritated by the interruption, Jinnah shot back: "Sit down!" he roared. "Neither the Muslim League Working Committee nor I ever passed a resolution [called] *Pakistan ka matlab kya*; you may have used it to catch a few votes."

Jinnah was actually right. But, reportedly, Sodai was disappointed, and Punjab's faith-healers formed their own political party in 1948, called the Jamiati-Ulema-i-Pakistan (JUP).

Back in the mid-1980s, when I was studying in a state-owned college in Karachi, there was an ageing man called Akhtar who worked as a senior clerk at the college. He had retired in the late 1970s, but was rehired as a contractual employee. He was born in Multan, and was in his 20s when Pakistan came into being in 1947. He had passionately taken part in the independence movement. As a teen, he was smitten by Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi's quasi-fascist Khaksar Movement, and then by the radical anti-Jinnah Islamist party, the Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam. However, Akhtar was eventually won over by AIML, when some of its workers convinced him that Jinnah was working towards creating an Islamic state.

To young men like myself who used to go around calling themselves 'Marxists' in the 1980s, Akhtar was surprisingly supportive, considering the fact that he never hid his sympathies for Islamist ideas. Perhaps the reason for this was his disillusionment

towards the League, which, according to him, had "lied to us" [the us being Punjabis like himself]. Akhtar was pained by the fact that his community and he had voted for AIML, believing that the party was going to create a 'true Islamic state'.

Akhtar was a supporter of the dictatorship of Gen Ziaul Haq, because, in his eyes, Zia was a bit more sincere than the League had been about making Pakistan a bastion of Islam. No wonder, then, that in 1979, Sodai's poem returned with a bang when the dictatorship turned it into a thumping marching song and began airing it on PTV and Radio Pakistan.

Another reason why Akhtar had no issue with me calling myself a Marxist was that he saw me as a member from his own ethnic group. Compared to the Urdu-speaking Mohajirs, Punjabis were a minority in Karachi. But what he did not know was that I was Mohajir from my mother's side. A Mohajir friend of mine at college, Tariq, thought Akhtar was a "closed-minded man and a fanatic who was distorting Islam".

Tariq was not secular. But his understanding of Islam was quite different than Akhtar's. He would often insist that Islam was "a balance between materialism and spirituality", and that men such as Akhtar had turned it into a political weapon.

Here, we can again see how different ethnic groups of the country comprehended and advocated Islam. The understanding of the religion in this context was tinged with histories, myths, cultures and even the political economy of every ethnic group. The meta-narrative of pre-1980s that had defined the *raison d'être* of Pakistan on the basis of Muslim unity and had relegated the theological aspects of it to the private sphere, was initially challenged by secular ethnic entities that perceived the narrative as an instrument of repression by the 'Punjabi and Mohajir elites.'

Sindhi, Baloch, Pakhtun and Bengali nationalists accused the Punjabis and the Mohajirs of duping them into 'joining' Pakistan so that the two could create political, economic and cultural hegemonies for themselves. Of course, the Mohajir were not understood as a separate ethnic group till the 1980s. They were mostly seen as Muslims who migrated from Hindu-majority areas.

Mohajir and Punjabi elites were denounced for usurping the rights of Muslims of Muslim-majority areas that had become part of Pakistan. Interestingly, the elites were often those who had not only migrated from Hindu-majority areas and were Urdu-speaking, but also Muslim Punjabis who arrived from East Punjab that had become part of India (Waseem, Jaffrelot). They too were 'minority-Muslims'.

The overarching tensions in the first 20 years of the country, as such, had a multi-layered dimension; mostly ethnic. The results of the 1970 elections may in a certain sense indicate the political rise of majority-Muslims who had always been rooted in what became Pakistan. Subsequently, folk music, that was once banned on state-owned platforms, poured into living rooms. It was not seen anymore as an art-form that 'promoted provincialism.' It was the product of majority Muslims. Likewise, the Sufi shrine culture began being romanticised, undermining the non-populist version of religion championed by the state till the 1960s.

But the minority-Muslims struck back when funds started flowing in from the Gulf in the 1980s. The majority Muslims were enticed and co-opted when the state began to build a new meta-narrative, which ignored the country's actual location and shifted it to an imaginary one thousands of miles away. Majority-Muslims lapped it up because they began to find jobs in oil-rich Arab countries and climbed the social ladder.

However, in its attempt to tap and appease resentments that men like Akhtar carried, the new narrative ended up empowering the resentments which then mutated and became the source of bigotry. For some time now, the state is struggling to rein in the forces that the narrative unleashed.

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A SLIPPERY SLOPE GETTING GREASIER BY THE DAY

While concerted attempts are being made to render Pakistani society homogenous, the threads that bind us together are fraying faster than ever before. What can be done to forestall the impending gloom, asks ZARRAR KHUHRO.

NOSTALGIA is one hell of a drug. Easily available to all and with as much mind-bending potential as any other narcotic, it performs the peculiar and comforting function of making the past seem rosier than it was. It imbues those who — like myself — have suffered through more than a few decades of life with, at the very least, the belief that things were once better; that society itself was better than it is today.

Was it, really? It is hard to be sure, and despite the insistent tide of romanticism trying to shipwreck you on the distant shore of constructed memory, one cannot shake the belief that every generation stretching back to the dawn of humanity has felt the same: that it used to be better in their days. Undoubtedly, I am doing the same. Things may look bad, but maybe they always have been more or less the way they are now.

And yet one cannot escape the feeling that the threads that tie together the very fabric of society are fraying faster than ever before, that the centre cannot and will not hold. There is a feeling of an inevitable and inexorable decline in every aspect of society, a descent that leads not to rock bottom, but to quicksand: you don't land with a thud and a splatter; you just keep sinking.

Everywhere, there is anger: an ugly, bubbling, boiling and foaming rage that seems to rise from the belly to the brain, short-circuiting our nervous systems as it goes. Unfocused and unreasoning, it is an anger that needs targets, and those we find all too easily everywhere around us.

We happily police the lives of others, because our own lives are so lawless. We find it all too easy to pass judgement on strangers, loudly censuring even the most minor deviations, while refusing to apply the same lofty standards to ourselves. We point fingers like it is a national sport, while ignoring the fact that when we do so, at least three fingers point right back at us. After all, nothing feels quite as right as self-righteousness. Everything — patriotism, virtue or religion included — is now a commodity to be bought and sold.

Our principles are as disposable as single-use plastics; our truths, buried under terabytes of lies; hypocrisy, our stock in trade. State repression is bad if those we support are its targets. Establishment's interference is to be lauded, but only if it takes place against our opponents. Like a cancer of the soul, the malignancy spreads and metastasises from the top down, producing polarised generations for whom black is white, and

up is down. Words themselves have lost their meaning from overuse and misuse, degraded in large part by those who have a mouth full of scripture and a heart full of hatred. And it is going to get far worse before, and if, it ever gets better.

How we ended up like being this is not a mystery. In fact, you could even say that it was inevitable given everything we have been through as a nation: we were born in the blood and chaos of Partition, the trauma of which, like a treasured family relic, is passed down from generation to generation. We were orphaned at too early an age and raised by a succession of adoptive and often abusive parents. The heroes we elevated to near-godhood always turned out to have feet of base, stinking clay.

No wonder then that more trauma followed; we have warred and continue to war against ourselves, with our victories all too often turning to ashes in our mouths as yesterday's patriots become today's traitors. We are still fed on a diet of falsehoods, raised on a regimen of denial, told that our problems were not our fault but that of others. Over and over, we were deceived into thinking that (if only) some messiah would appear and clean up the whole system, we would finally achieve our destined glory; that if only someone would free us from the shackles of (insert your preferred bugbear here!), we would inevitably rise to prophesised heights. It is a seductive lie, one that appeals not only to our ego, but provides the fuel for the rage that is then so easily directed towards whatever target the false prophets of the day choose.

Like good little lemmings, we have happily been marched off many a cliff, and told we were flying. Worst yet, we seem to be happy with the deception, and why wouldn't we be when the lie is so much more comforting than the reality? What could be easier than to deny our own responsibilities and agency, and instead ascribe our failures to dark forces beyond our control? Isn't this why we choose to cling for dear life to the wildest conspiracy theories rather than face the sobering realisation that we are the architects of our own fate in a chaotic universe?

It is also not a surprise that, despite so many decades of existence, we are still in the throes of an identity crisis. The geniuses who consider themselves the architects of our fate found diversity of opinion, faith, ethnicity and ideology to be frightening and tried to steamroll us into an imposed homogeneity. In retrospect, it seems obvious that any such

effort was always doomed to backfire, given that it is much like trying to hold water in your hand by squeezing your fist.

In the name of strength and unity, they put us in straightjackets and now they wonder why the world around them looks like an insane asylum.

We find ourselves in a position where the very institutions that brought us to this pass themselves stand diminished and discredited and unable to command or demand respect. Thus, it is natural that, in the face of such crippling uncertainty, we form tribes. We divide and subdivide ourselves into the 'us' who will set everything right, and the accursed 'them' who stand in the way of all that is holy and righteous.

Now, you could argue that it has always been this way, and you would be right. But today there is also a crucial difference: today we are at the mercy of social media algorithms that harness our anger and hate to maximise engagement. Now, the tribe is a click away and the pressure to hate what they hate and love what they love is well nigh impossible to resist. That conditional validation is what we crave, that rage is what we use to fill the abyss of our souls, that fleeting dopamine hit that joining the mob gets us is our drug of choice, and, like addicts, we live in constant fear of withdrawal.

We mistake bravado for bravery, but this is just cowardice masquerading as courage; rage alone isn't going to build us a better society and bitterness certainly is not going to lead to a better future. For that to happen, we need to develop the ability to talk to, and not at, each other. For us to move forward we have to treat conversation not as a blood sport in which there can be only one victor, but as a collaboration in which one can learn and, perhaps even more crucially, unlearn.

And make no mistake: progress is not and will never be linear. For every step forward, there may be three steps backwards and we must shed the somewhat arrogant belief that positive change is only worthwhile if it takes place instantly, or at the very least within our lifetimes. The fact is that you could struggle your entire life for a cause only to find that victory denied you. Struggle anyway. Sometimes, you must build a bridge of your own bones, knowing you yourself will never get to cross it. Build it anyway.

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CAUGHT BETWEEN STATE AND RELIGION

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address the issues that were tugging at the seams. The 1962 Constitution did away with direct elections and parliamentary form of government. It did not even seek to deal with the serious constitutional afflictions of the country.

The secular pretensions of Ayub Khan were put to an early test. It did not take him long to capitulate to the demand of the religious right. His constitution was suitably trimmed. Islam inserted. Once again, the moderate and enlightened principles of Islam were extolled. Once again, the interpretation of these principles was left to its most obscurantist followers. The old practice perfected by the British and continued after independence was perpetuated. To combat nationalist forces, the administration sought allies in religious leaders.

In 1970 and 1971, attempts to negate the popular mandate of the Awami League led to civil war. A common religion had not prevented the Arab revolt against the Turks in the first quarter of the 20th century. In its third quarter, the adhesive of Islam was not enough to keep the Bengalis glued to Pakistan. Nothing has been learnt from that experience. And, like in the past, religion is still proving insufficient to restrain nationalists demanding greater autonomy.

The hubris of the ruling elite that it can, by giving a minor concession, manipulate the orthodox has had significant consequences. As these concessions piled up, the constitutional scheme was slowly but fundamentally altered. The Objectives Resolution was inserted as a Preamble of every constitution. Liaquat’s interpretation of the resolution and his argument that a non-Muslim can be the head of the administration and a theocracy could not be established had no place in this scheme. All laws had to be vetted by a Council of Islamic Ideology.

For a while, the courts resisted the argument that the Objectives Resolution be regarded as the grundnorm of the Constitution and treated as its substantial part. All such pockets of resistance were swept away by the brutal dictatorship of Gen Ziaul Haq. The Objectives Resolution was made a substantive part of the Constitution and religious constitutional courts manned by *ulema* were established with authority to strike down any law they regarded as un-Islamic.

Proda and Ebdo were no longer necessary. A new model was found. A host of nebulous qualifications was now inserted in the name of Islam to oust troublemakers. They lay dormant for a while, but that was only a matter of time. In recent years, they have been repeatedly used to disqualify politicians for life and to oust a prime minister.

Islam, which was to be a source of guidance and moderation for democratic practices, now dominates the Constitution. All political debate on some of the most contentious issues of the day is stifled on religious grounds. Even filing an appeal to the Supreme Court against a decision of the Federal Shariat Court on a vital issue affecting the entire economic system is regarded as an act of sacrilege. Bhupindra Kumar Datta, of the opposition, speak-

ing on the Objectives Resolution, had warned in 1949: “You bring in religion ... you open the door again for resentment of criticism”.

For three quarters of a century, the ruling elite has ignored the progressive voices in the country. The old alliances forged by colonial administrators with ultra-conservative *ulema* have been further strengthened. Nationalist and progressive concerns ignored. The rulers, whoever they may be — from the first prime minister to the present, from Ghulam Mohammad to Gen Pervaiz Musharraf — have believed that by pandering to the religious right while retaining the levers of political control, they can marginalise the forces of change. By making religion the dominant constitutional theme, they can stifle criticism. They thought, in their hubris, that they can also simultaneously manipulate the *ulema*. The converse has proved true. Instead of being able to successfully outmanoeuvre the conservatives, they have ended up being outmanoeuvred by them.

Political, legal and constitutional control has been ceded to the religious right. It has reduced the space for a tolerant politics and neutral constitutional processes. The politicians who expatiated about clearing the constitution of military encroachments through the 18th and 19th Amendments could not even repeal the wide-ranging incursions of Zia in the name of Islamisation.

Writing about constitutional development in Pakistan almost 60 years ago, G.W. Chowdhury, an otherwise astute observer of the constitutional landscape, wrote: “The issue between state and religion, although a dominating theme until 1954, is no longer a very active issue in Pakistani politics. By 1956, it was losing its momentum and by the 1960s, it had become an academic exercise”. He was wrong. We have seen worse. All that anyone in doubt needs to do is to only glance at the newspapers of the last couple of months.

He was right, however, that Pakistan is “a laboratory for constitutional experiments”. One may add: failed constitutional experiments, which we continue to repeat with similar results. After 75 years, it is perhaps time to experiment anew. A little attention to regional demands, some accommodation with nationalist forces, a bit of respect for provincial autonomy and a distancing from the obscurantists may yet produce the elusive commonwealth that we have so far denied to ourselves.

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HAZARDS OF JUDICIAL IMBALANCE

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sacked for declining to follow judicial orders which were not unproblematic. Prime minister Nawaz Sharif was ousted on a curious reading of jurisprudence ranging from parliamentary privilege to income tax.

Suo moto jurisprudence, since the heady days of chief justice Chaudhary, has ebbed and flowed depending on the disposition of the chief justice. The other disturbing trends of the last decade of the

previous century have, however, not receded. The disputes between judges are now regularly aired in public. The chief justice continues to remain the master of the roster. Applications for constitution of full court are made more often than ever. They are routinely denied. Issues of far-reaching constitutional significance are decided by benches of three to five members. Sometimes by a bare majority. Wide new doctrines of uncertain provenance, which allow judges to read things into the Constitution, are introduced by the smallest of benches with the narrowest of margins. While the small size results in a quick and efficient outcome, it diminishes the authority of the court.

Momentous matters are decided by short orders and reasons not released for months. The court commands confidence by its power to reason and persuade. In the absence of reasons, it is difficult to persuade anyone that the decision has been correctly arrived at. The delay in reasons lends credence to accusations of constitutional rewriting. It does nothing to subdue raging political passions.

Divisive political issues do not get resolved by judicial rulings. Only the locus of controversy shifts from the public arena and parliament to the courts. The judicial decision is no doubt final. No losing side, in a contentious political matter, accepts either that it has been made impartially or that it is just. Impetuous politicians and their diehard supporters do not move away from their entrenched positions because the courts have spoken. The tide of popular passion does not recede when the matter is judicially decided. It turns against the person of the judge and the institution of judiciary.

Some controversies are unavoidable. The questions that they raise can be decided by no one, but the courts. By anchoring their jurisprudence in precedent and reason, the judges can garner more support for their views. By speaking with the authority of the full court they can avoid the suspicion that the outcome would have differed had others not been excluded from the bench.

Some of the disputes are avoidable. The court can decline to answer questions which do not lend themselves to adjudication. Political questions which cannot be decided by reference to legal standards should be left to politicians. The humility to accept that some matters are best left to processes of politics and other institutions of the state does not diminish the authority of courts.

Political questions in a federation often reach courts. That does not mean that every such question must be legally decided. The inclination of people to bring such matters to court must not be interpreted as an invitation to government by judiciary. This temptation is as destructive of federal republican principles as any attempt by the executive to control courts. Judicial overreach is no less dangerous than executive control of the judiciary. Both ultimately threaten the fundamentals of constitutional government.

As the developments of the last few months have demonstrated, the courts achieve little when they try to do much. They are at their best when they operate away from the midst of the political thicket. By gently nudging the nation in the right direction, by providing guidance in constitutional norms, by taking a long view of the fads and furies of the day

and by giving space to the politicians to act wisely or foolishly, they help establish the federal government of which they are an indispensable, co-equal branch. Neither so acquiescent that constitutional limitations become illusory for the rulers of the day nor so dominant that the judges overstep constitutional boundaries and threaten their own place in the federation.

The history of our judiciary is a history of search for this balance. Finding it remains a challenge. But once found, it would tether our federation to the principles of republican government.

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A CONFLUENCE OF CHALLENGES

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social landscape that open up possibilities for the country to escape its unedifying past. For instance, political actors — parties, leaders and other stakeholders in the political process — have developed a common stake in the preservation of democracy. This was not always the case in the past. There is now wide acceptance and firm public consensus that military intervention is not the answer or even an option. The military is part of this consensus. This has translated into de-legitimisation of military rule although this does not yet mean de-legitimisation of the military’s role in national affairs.

Besides, a rebalancing of power among state institutions has been underway in the democratisation process, which has now proceeded uninterrupted for 14 years, with different actors trying to find their place in a changing political landscape.

A renegotiation and realignment of power is underway between various national stakeholders — executive, parliament, judiciary, and the army. At times this vying for space has unleashed tension and friction, but this should be seen as part of an inevitable process to establish a new equilibrium, which involves determination and acceptance of each institution’s legitimate role.

OLD & NEW POWER STRUCTURES

Also, the old power structure is being transformed by the emergence of several new countervailing forces — an activist judiciary, an energetic media, and a vibrant civil society. The power of public opinion is an increasingly important factor shaping the political discourse in the country. This is changing power dynamics as well as how people judge government performance, making Pakistan part of a global trend of greater transparency brought about by the revolution in modern communications. This has generated a new sense of public awareness and empowerment.

And, finally, the rise of a larger, more assertive urban middle class is a critical factor. Its size may be disputed (it is put anywhere between 50 and 70 million people), but the reality is not. The political dynamics unleashed by a middle class that wants a bigger political voice first expressed itself in the lawyers’ movement of 2007-08.

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RISING

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Concept render - Urban regeneration of Old Walton Airport

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Although the campaign had a single-point agenda, it reflected wider democratic aspirations and was spearheaded by middle-class professionals, with politicians following, not leading, the urban upsurge.

An urban middle class wanting to play a role in the country’s politics holds opportunities to align Pakistan’s governance system both with the forces of demographic change, and also with the relatively modernist impulses of a social class whose worldview is quite different from the change-averse, traditional society. The transformed environment, characterised by the rise of new actors, more-empowered institutions, and an expanding middle class, is recasting the relationship between the state and the citizen.

Only the future will determine if these changes can crystallise into a new kind of politics that goes beyond a power game to connect governance with public purpose, and taps into the resilience of the Pakistani nation to establish a foundation for effective governance that people have long deserved, but have been deprived of.

The writer is a former ambassador to the US, UK & UN.

CULT OF CHARISMA

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lead to a better future. Altaf, like Bhutto, mobilised the students on politically active campuses. Between Altaf and Nawaz, the PPP was faced with a new political leadership that would make the 1990s as much their decade as it was Benazir’s.

However, within a decade, this new, younger generation of leaders gave way to another military dictatorship and another period of rapid growth led by easy money flowing in thanks to troubles inside Afghanistan. By the time Gen Pervez Musharraf was in the twilight of his rule, another spate of urban protests, joined by the burgeoning middle class fostered by his tenure, confronted him.

If Bhutto found support from left-wing students and trade unions, those at the forefront in 2006-07 were young students, members of a growing middle class, and members of the legal fraternity. Once Musharraf was removed, the traditional parties could not offer much to this urban class which in any case had few memories of, say, Benazir for any sense of nostalgia or hope. The old order was not for them.

RETURN OF THE FAMILIAR

This left the space open for Imran Khan, a well-known and familiar character critical of the old order and equipped with the communication skills and techniques familiar to the post-Musharraf generation. He was the choice of the urban classes.

He appealed to this emerging group as Bhutto had once done to those disenchanted with Ayub. In both, the people found a leader who was willing to reach out. Bhutto’s oratory skills are often mentioned, but less so is the fact that he travelled extensively all around the country to mobilise people at a time when it was not so routine. Khan, over the years, may have had to improve his speaking

skills, but he was the first to realise the importance of social media in reaching out. He used new media to reach out to a generation more comfortable with TikTok than newspapers.

This is a generation comprising the comfortable middle class which wants a more equal relationship with its leadership than one of respectful distance. It includes the young, educated men working in shops and hotels who want to have a better life. If they are educated, they may not have a job; if they have a job, they want a better one. They are the motorbike riders stopped routinely by police as the big cars zoom by.

In cities, such as Islamabad, they are the young men working in small stores whose bosses tend to support the PML-N. Many of them are migrants who have settled in cities, and, hence, are not bound by the *biradari* or community links which may determine their voting choices.

As Bilal Gilani wrote recently, “The current revolt centres around three key segments of the population: youth (18-30-year-olds), the internet connected, and those with FA or above education. Numerous surveys ... show that support for the PTI revolt is significantly more pronounced in these three segments.”

The ecosystem in Pakistan has not delivered to them. When Khan threatens to bring it down, he is voicing their rage. Once again, his support base may not lead to an electoral majority, but then that is what Pakistani history has been about: leaders who ride a minority crest to power.

There are two additional factors working in PTI’s favour. First, The absence of a national-level popular leader since the assassination of Benazir has allowed Khan to fill that vacuum. He is the only one among the current crop who can comfortably address large crowds in province after province, moving from Peshawar to Karachi to Lahore — a feat once limited to the Bhutto family.

Second, recent events have allowed the PTI to sweep KP. The rapid growth in the province, (according to a recent UNDP report, it grew faster than the rest of Pakistan during the Musharraf period) and the brutal assassination of the traditional political elite of the province at the hand of the TTP in the post-2007 period have allowed Khan to capture the province’s imagination and dominate it politically.

Once again, it is the change and the emergence or strengthening of a class which has led to the rise of a new leader, who has then moulded themselves to offer what the people want. That he has no ideology or programme to offer is a global phenomenon. There are no counter-narratives to capitalism, which, at the moment, has few answers itself. Hence, we see the rise of leaders the world over without any strategy or vision or plan, because they provide hope or simply the optics of change to a besieged people looking to just be rid of the old order, which they find inequitable.

That once again it is the urban, educated class which has led to the emergence of a leader is even more evident if one looks beyond Khan. The post-Musharraf period has seen similar phenomena outside of the mainstream as well. The insurgency in Balochistan, too, as has been pointed out again and again, is being led by a young, educated Baloch

youth which does not look up to tribal leaders. This is why the violence refuses to end despite state efforts to co-opt the sardars and even the nationalist leadership in the province for over a decade.

Similarly, in what was once known as Fata, it is Manzoor Pashteen and other young, educated men around him, who have provided leadership to a young generation angry at their displacement and suffering. Despite not having gotten the kind of support and patronage provided to PTI, they have flourished because the anger of their supporters is genuine.

If seen as part of a larger trend in Pakistan, what is being witnessed is the change being forced upon an insular political system by its young, urban population which is alienated not just from the political leadership, but the entire edifice, be it economic, political, judicial. The challenge before the state and society is to end their alienation, politically and socially, from Waziristan to Khuzdar to Karachi. The leadership it throws up, whether it is palatable or not, is a symptom —not the problem itself.

The writer is a journalist.

SECURITY STATE AND ITS DILEMMAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 36

economic reforms. However, his intention to retain and extend political power overrode any other imperative. Political chaos soon enveloped the country, and civil disorder gave rise to a military coup on July 5, 1977, led by army chief Gen Ziaul Haq in what was called Operation Fair Play.

The Zia years were notable for the fact that he enjoyed Washington’s backing, especially after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the army benefitted in many respects with a flood of equipment and assistance in training.

He furthered the nuclear programme and introduced the Islamic Penal Code of 1979, which served only to polarise the nation. Higher education was set back by the introduction of ‘Urdu-medium’ schools that emphasised religious instruction. He died in an as yet unexplained plane crash on August 17, 1988, and left a mixed legacy from what was the longest of the three military regimes to rule Pakistan.

The election following Zia’s death was won by Benazir Bhutto, who alternated with Nawaz Sharif as prime minister in the years 1988 to 1999, in which period the army seemed efficient and loyal, as observed personally by this scribe from 1988 to 1995, and concentrated on training and equipping in order to resist what it saw as a growing threat. This threat was manifested by India’s Exercise Brasstacks of 1986-87 that lasted three months and in which over half-a-million troops carried out massive manoeuvres in Rajasthan, close to the Pakistan border.

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THE MUSHARRAF ERA

Gen Pervez Musharraf attended the UK’s Royal College of Defence Studies in 1990-91 and did quite well, with the commandant observing that

“his country is fortunate to have the services of his undeniable quality”. It could not be foreseen, however, that Musharraf’s academic ability in military studies would not necessarily translate to balanced practicality in the higher direction of war — or to the governance of the country.

Prime minister Nawaz Sharif appointed him army chief in October 1998, and in 1999 Musharraf authorised a clandestine war against Indian troops in the Kargil sector of the Line of Control with India.

In shades of the futile Operation Gibraltar in 1965, the Kargil War, known in India as Operation Vijay, was a resounding failure for Pakistan, and Islamabad’s attempts to depict the conflict as a popular uprising were absurd.

Following the fiasco, the premier understandably attempted to remove Musharraf as army chief, but his efforts were unsuccessful. This resulted in yet another army coup, with Musharraf on October 12 declaring a state of emergency, suspending the Constitution and taking power as ‘chief executive’. He became president in 2002, through a referendum whose legitimacy was widely questioned.

The army benefitted from Musharraf’s presidency, especially in training and equipment, and his energetic support of the Bush ‘War on Terror’ had positive effects on the subcontinent.

POST-MUSHARRAF YEARS

Musharraf surrounded himself with sycophants and persuaded himself that only he could be the saviour of his country, which was suffering both economically and from a rise in Islamic militancy.

In 2007, he attempted to remove chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry because he feared the Supreme Court would negate his re-election as president, and the country began to unravel to the extent that in the face of impeachment, he resigned on August 18, 2008.

The following years saw government by politicians, notably Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated in 2007, and Nawaz Sharif, who was convicted of corruption in 2017. Although some members of the two governments attempted to tackle the endemic problems of poverty and illiteracy, there was little progress.

Domestic corruption and terrorism continued to be major challenges, and though several long-term economic agreements with China came into force in May 2013, there was little immediate effect on ordinary citizens. Meanwhile, the armed forces of Pakistan benefitted both in acquisition of material as well as through involvement in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Just as the country was gearing up to celebrate 75 years of its independence, the government of Imran Khan, in office since July 2018, was removed through a parliamentary no-confidence motion in April 2022, and Shehbaz, the younger Sharif family, found himself in the prime minister’s office.

COUNTERING TERRORISM

During the last 14 years of democracy, the army in Pakistan considered it a major responsibility to counter the menace of terrorism. According to pub-

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lished data, there were over 12,000 terrorist incidents in the period, resulting in the deaths of some 15,000 civilians and 5,200 members of the security forces. While there is little doubt that the army, with the approval of some sections of various governments, had a working relationship with the Afghan Taliban, its internal security duties exacted a massive toll and, to an extent, altered operational focus.

There is, however, continuing concentration on planning for counter-India operations and what some analysts regard as a misguided emphasis on the development of tactical nuclear weapons, for which the employment doctrine is unclear.

It appears that the army now intends to stay out of direct governance as such, but continues to desire a say in matters affecting domestic and international security to a greater degree than is common in democracies.

This need not necessarily be detrimental to the national interest, but it is to be hoped that there will never be a repeat of such operations as Gibraltar, Chengiz Khan, Fair Play and others. The nuclear world is too dangerous for such adventures, and Pakistan’s democracy, although faltering, deserves support from all its citizens.

The writer is a commentator on politics and military affairs, specialising in South Asia.

A MISREPRESENTED TRAGEDY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

on about 100,000 unarmed non-Bengalis — before the army response began.

The barbarism continued till the army regained control by end April/early May 1971. Many of the actual excesses attributed to the army between March 25 and December 16, 1971, were unforgivably but obviously committed as retaliation for the grisly sights of thousands of corpses of non-Bengali children, women and men left behind by the killers before the army’s arrival.

The silence on this genocide was further aided by the government’s decision not to allow reporting about the mass killings of non-Bengalis either by state media or by private media to prevent retaliatory killings of Bengalis in West Pakistan. Even after news of the massacres became more known post-1971, not a single Bengali person was harmed as revenge in West Pakistan. In contrast, between Dhaka’s fall and March 1972, spasmodic killings of Biharis continued.

Ironically, after about 25 years of erratic efforts to absorb about 200,000 Biharis who wanted to migrate to Pakistan, we turned our backs on them. And, instead, opened our doors to over four million Afghan refugees.

TWO-NATION THEORY THRIVES

Indira Gandhi, gleefully but with twisted understanding of history, declared that the Two-Nation Theory had sunk forever into the Bay of Bengal in December 1971. Each passing day over the past 50 years proves how wrong she was. Bangladesh remains independently predominantly Muslim, with no desire whatsoever to merge with the predominantly Hindu West Bengal despite sharing language, ethnicity and culture.

Though encircled by India on three sides, Bangladesh treasures its separateness and often, non-officially more than officially, rejects India’s hegemonistic ambitions. Indian Muslims remain Indian citizens, but they too perceive themselves to be a distinct nation-like community within a multinational Indian state, even more so after Hindutva’s ascent. Pakistani Muslim nationalism thrives robustly.

PROGRESS AND RESILIENCE

Many in today’s Pakistan rightly admire the speed and quality of Bangladesh’s progress in the past 20 years, and rue our own failure to keep pace with our former East Wing. Without detracting from Bangladesh’s achievement, it is vital to allow for the extremely different geopolitical and internal conditions faced by Pakistan.

Afghanistan’s fallout for the past 40 years is one example, India’s perennial hostility for 75 years, including its introduction of nuclear weapons into South Asia, is another. And unlike Bangladesh’s advantage of basic homogeneity, the new post-1971 Pakistan had to conduct an unprecedented struggle to infuse cohesion while retaining diversity, to renew, rebuild, rejuvenate both its national morale and its physical capacity, manage a higher population growth rate than Bangladesh’s, decentralise power to the provinces, cope with a still-unresolved civil-military imbalance and combat terrorism on a far larger scale than Bangladesh has had to.

Given all the crises, imposed by others as also self-created, as we take stock of where Pakistan stands today in 2022 compared to where we were in 1971, we should count our blessings. We have evolved a sense of ‘Pakistaniat’, a broad national identity in which we take pride even as we bemoan our continuing self-made disasters.

With much still left to learn, we should also draw strength from our charming self-confidence and good cheer. In the World Happiness Index we already rank higher than all other South Asian countries, including Bangladesh. A report on June 16, 2022, informed us that in a 19,000- people global survey conducted by the Worldwide Independent Network of Market Research of which Gallup Pakistan is a part, Pakistanis are at the very top of 24 nations when it comes to expressing love for their country.

When asked ‘How attached do you feel with your country?’, 90pc Pakistanis said they strongly do so; ahead of Finland, Canada, Japan, and 20 others. When asked ‘Will you defend your country in case of war?’, 96pc said ‘Without hesitation’; again more than all others. When asked ‘Will you leave your country when you have good opportunities abroad?’, 70pc said ‘No’.

The year 1971 shall never be forgotten, while the aeon beckons us to the next 75 years!

The writer is an author and former senator & federal minister. In 2021, he wrote and executive produced a 110-minute documentary Separation of East Pakistan: The Untold Story, viewable at www.1971UntoldStory.com.

STEALTH, CONVICTION AND THE BOMB

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out of the meeting as an expression of annoyance at Pakistan’s uncompromising hard line on its nuclear programme. He denounced Ishaq Khan as ‘Mr Nuke’, and spewed some choice but unprintable epithets for his Pakistani interlocutors.

The last lap in the bomb project was quite fortuitous. On April 6, 1998, I was at the PM House with Mian Nawaz Sharif, who at the time was the prime minister, when he received army chief Gen Jehangir Karamat and Dr Khan. They proudly played the cassette of Pakistan’s successful test of Ghauri, a missile with a 1,500km range armed with a nuclear warhead. This was a strategic game-changer because Indian targets were now within range of Pakistan’s most lethal weapon.

On May 11, 1998, the former prime minister and I were in Kazakhstan for a summit. It had just ended and we were trekking in the hills around Almaty when we got the shocking news that India had tested the bomb. When Nawaz asked my opinion, I said: “Mian Sahib, it’s now or never. India has provided us a golden opportunity; we should go for the blast.”

When Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had come to Lahore in February 1999 on his historic bus ride, Nawaz smilingly opened the talks by thanking the Indian leader “for providing us the opportunity which enabled Pakistan to become a nuclear power”. Vajpayee listened unfazed, unsmiling.

The period between May 11, when India tested, and May 28, when Pakistan responded, was probably Pakistan’s finest hour. The planning and execution were meticulous. There were broad consultations with the political leadership and opinion leaders, followed by a national consensus. Our messaging was mature and reasoned minus any jingoism, or even a hint of any triumphalism.

The single most important national security decision in the history

of Pakistan was purely a civilian decision taken by the elected political leadership. Among the three service chiefs, one was opposed, one supported and the third was neutral, saying “Sir, it is your decision”.

When the history of the bomb is written, the credit must go to five individuals for pulling off this historic feat. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, for initiating the programme and pushing it with single-minded determination. Ghulam Ishaq Khan, for personally supervising the project for 17 years, from 1976 to 1993, with an unwavering resolve. Dr A.Q. Khan and his talented team, for pulling off what was widely perceived as a ‘mission impossible’. Gen Zia, for continuing the programme through a sophisticated stealth approach of deception, quite similar to how other countries, like Israel and India, got their bombs. And, finally, Nawaz Sharif, for taking the momentous decision to detonate the bomb, defying all the pressures and inducements to the contrary.

At the end of the day, this was truly a national achievement. As Pakistan celebrates 75 years of its independence, the bomb project remains an eloquent testimony to the resilience of our nation. Given leadership and strategic clarity, Pakistanis can rise to the occasion and deliver, and, in the immortal words of the Quaid-i-Azam, “prove themselves equal to the task”.

The writer is a journalist who was Editor of The Muslim, and currently chairs the Senate Defense Committee.

BETWEEN AMBITION AND CONSTRAINTS

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in February 1971, Bhutto had ominously remarked, “There are three forces in Pakistan; two must clash so that one can come up.” This is precisely what happened. As a consequence, the country was split, and residual Pakistan diminished in stature. It is moot how history would have been shaped if the crisis were resolved amicably instead of by bloodshed.

Regardless of his role in 1971, Bhutto is rightly credited for picking up the pieces. He moved with alacrity, taking initiatives on both internal and external fronts. He mobilised consensus for a new Constitution which has withstood the vagaries of the country’s turbulent politics. He negotiated a respectable agreement at Simla under grim circumstances without relenting on the deeply emotive issues of POWs and war-crime trials.

On Kashmir, India claimed to have restricted negotiations to a bilateral format, but Bhutto managed to secure a text that could be interpreted to protect Pakistan’s position on UNSC resolutions. Here, it is relevant to recall that in a late-night meeting in September 1972, Agha Shahi convinced Zhou Enlai of the need for China to help Pakistan by vetoing Bangladesh’s admission to the UN.

The 1974 Islamic Summit in Lahore was a high watermark of Pakistan’s diplomacy. It launched the PLO. The aura of Muslim leaders gathered in Lahore enabled Pakistan to cross an important hurdle: the recognition of Bangladesh. This facilitated the completion of Pakistani POWs’ return from India. Thus, the 1971 self-inflicted wounds started healing, but the scars remain permanent.

FACING INDIA

Permanent Pakistan-India hostility is untenable philosophically and considering challenges such as climate change. Nevertheless, they have fought four wars and accused each other of terrorism, while periods of calm in their relations have been patchy.

More than communal hatred, Kashmir is the source of tension. Pakistan regards the dispute as an unfinished agenda of independence, and it stirs deep emotions at least for one simple reason: a large part of the thickly populated belt between Rawalpindi and Lahore is of Kashmiri extraction.

On the other hand, India nurses deep fear of disintegration if any territory under its control appears to secede. Meanwhile, Kashmiris in the valley have not reconciled to the Indian control.

The Kashmir dispute could have been resolved at the time of independence. Subsequently, the UN Security Council resolutions called for a plebiscite, which India formally rejected in 1952 (reacting to UNSC Resolution 98) on the pretence that Pakistan’s emergent military alliance with the US had altered circumstances.

Nehru believed that, with an increasing power differential, time was on India’s side. Nonetheless, he did commit his government to the idea of autonomy for Kashmir, which echoed in the approach adopted by Manmohan Singh, and distinguished the Congress’s position from the BJP’s insistence on absorbing Kashmir into the Indian Union.

The Musharraf-Manmohan Singh Four-Point Formula was meant to ensure maximum comfort and self-governance for the Kashmiris on a sub-regional basis while safeguarding the essential interests of both countries. There was substantial progress. The last draft cleared by the Indian side in March 2007 needed to address a few resolvable points from Pakistan’s angle. The process was stalled by the judicial crisis in Pakistan and then the Mumbai attacks, and later by the fog of politics bereft of political courage. There is little chance of the BJP agreeing to revive the proposal. India will only relent if there is a strong Kashmiri movement in the valley.

India faces no international pressure. The weakness of Pakistan’s international card became evident as early as 1993 when it failed to garner support for a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council. Since the mid-1990s, India exploited the rising international concern over terrorism by attributing unrest in Kashmir to non-state actors. Modi’s August 2019 steps and harsh clampdown in the valley have drawn criticism in the media, but the international environment favours India, which is now aligned with Western interests in Asia.

Modi’s approach to exclude Kashmir from any discussion with Pakistan removes the heart of the Simla framework for dialogue. Recent debates in Pakistan on geo-economics brought up an idea to defer the Kashmir dispute to a propitious timing in the future while at present focussing on “low hanging fruits”, including trade. This is questionable.

In 2006, distrust derailed progress on a potentially viable proposal for turning Siachen into a zone of disengagement, ad referendum agreed between the two Foreign Offices. On trade, past discussions have shown that India’s tariff structures and non-tariff barriers are a major hurdle.

The current circumstances offer little optimism and have reduced the relations to minimum interaction. While escalation must be avoided, Pakistan can wait if India insists on its terms for dialogue and normalisation. Alternatively, if the BJP government shows willingness to revisit its policy on Kashmir and to restrain its anti-Muslim Hindutva rancour, Pakistan-India relations can move towards upgradation, dialogue and normalisation.

There is an ideological rationale for Pakistan to have improved relations with India. Today, Muslims in India and in occupied Kashmir are the target of Hindutva-driven forces. Hostility between the two countries worsens their plight which is contrary to the purpose the founding fathers of Pakistan had in mind.

GEO-ECONOMICS

Geo-economics cannot be leveraged without taking into consideration geopolitical imperatives and difficult decisions for adjustment. Pakistan claims the advantage of being a communications and commercial bridge among South Asia, West Asia and Central Asia, whereas, on the ground, it only geographically links South Asia with the other two regions.

In South Asia, India is the elephant in the room. The important prospective energy pipelines make economic sense only if extended to India, which is unlikely to join without normal conditions for assured supply. China has a definite interest in commerce through Gwadar; CPEC projects are the mainstay of FDI in Pakistan, but security is the primary requisite.

Connectivity supplements development, however, much depends on stable domestic policies and conditions. Once developed, a country’s economic strength generates economic gravity to attract outside economic interests.

For example, the Ukrainian situation may well lead to a new economic configuration. Are we positioned to take advantage of it? Countries with substantial foreign currency reserves are already buying cheap Russian oil. Climate change would add to the influence of

countries with large food reserves. Much of geo-economics is common sense, capacity and clarity of purpose.

ESSENTIALLY ITS OWN PATH

Wherein lies pragmatism in Pakistan’s foreign policy? Joining alliances at an early stage may have been prompted by expediency or opportunism. But its major decisions to accept a ceasefire in 1965 and on the Western front in 1971 were based on a realisation of the futility of continuing the armed conflict.

Conceived in the shadows, Kargil was a diplomatic disaster, especially for its timing on the heels of the nuclear tests and the Lahore Summit, but then the mistake was realised, and retrieval worked out. Later, Musharraf declared a unilateral ceasefire along the LoC, which led to the 2004 Islamabad SAARC Summit, followed by his peace initiative. The February 2019 escalation was diffused partly by a fortuitous diplomatic gesture to return the captured Indian pilot.

These and other examples cited here also suggest that Pakistan’s initiatives and policy decisions, right or wrong, were driven by its own national impulses and perceived interests rather than outside diktat. Besides a lingering sentiment against its joining the US alliances, the view that Pakistan has not followed an independent foreign policy goes back to the angst felt in the 1960s at Pakistan’s exclusion from the Non-Aligned Movement. The NAM was then an influential grouping at international forums led by Yugoslavia, Egypt and India, although in these forums, Pakistan also kept a remarkably high profile.

Pakistan’s positions on most issues resonated with the large majority of world community. Pakistan also successfully coordinated with this majority to defend its positions. The 1980s UN vote on Afghanistan and Pakistan’s initiatives within the like-minded group on UN reforms readily come to mind in this regard.

Overall, given global pressures and domestic limitations, Pakistan’s major foreign policy decisions and positions have followed a fairly independent course. Pakistan has been resilient and a significant regional power wanting to be a factor of balance and stability in a region prone to conflict and tension.

Some credit must go to Foreign Office professionalism, but, as the dictum goes, foreign policy is intrinsically a function of internal political cohesion and economic and military strength. The extraordinary problems Pakistan faces today are essentially internal, and demand extraordinary measures. They cannot be overcome by external manoeuvring.

The writer is an author and a former foreign secretary.



Pakistan does not need any more bricks and mortar for the promotion of science because there is plenty of that around already, like the PINSTECH building seen above.

STORY OF THE REJECTION OF SCIENCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

skilled people who can be gainfully employed in various sectors of the economy.

Irrespective of what area of science a student chooses, the key point that can make a graduate valuable is adaptability. A broad range of interests and knowledge — and a good understanding of subject basics — enables the students to be useful in different kinds of jobs.

Very few Pakistan institutions have done well at this. Hence, employers in the Middle East generally hire Pakistanis at lower levels relative to Indians, Iranians and Bangladeshis. Leaving aside the imported Cambridge system, rote-centred learning has discouraged students from logical thinking and stunted their cognitive capacities. The mathematical abilities of students and their teachers are generally poor. The only exceptions in the indigenous education system are exceptionally bright students at the right end of the Bell curve.

The poor quality of graduates emerging from Pakistani universities has caused employers to lose trust in grades and degrees. Many with PhDs are all but illiterate in their fields and unable to answer simple questions. At the same time, the number of publications produced by students has skyrocketed. Towards the end of studentship, many are credited with more papers than professors in the 1970s would have published over their lifetimes.

Professors and their students, encouraged by a disastrous policy by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to reward publication numbers, have created a system where at least 90 per cent of so-called research papers are faulty, trivial or plagiarised. Whereas Chinese, Indian and Iranian speakers are invited to deliver lectures at top US campuses, Pakistan’s hyper-productive professors are nowhere to be seen there. Still, international university ranking organisations pick up numerical data and use their computers to create misleading rankings.

WHAT NOT TO DO

The degradation in Pakistan’s scientific capabilities is alarming. Just how far Pakistan has fallen into the pit of ignorance and self-delusion was illustrated by a self-styled engineer trained in Khairpur’s polytechnic institute who claimed to have invented a ‘water kit’ that would extract energy from water. Never mind that this violated the rules of thermodynamics, and the rest of the world couldn’t do it. He promised a new Pakistan with limitless energy, no need for petrol or gas, and no more loadshedding.

Politicians and media stars can perhaps be excused for being jubi-

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lant. But even our famed scientists fell for it and praised the ‘water car’ publically. No practical joker could have demonstrated more dramatically the true state of science in Pakistan.

In this situation, one needs to carefully think about what to do, and, even more importantly, what not to do.

First, Pakistan does not need any more bricks and mortar for science; there is plenty of that around. A drive along Islamabad’s Constitution Avenue is lined with Pakistan’s most important buildings: Presidency, Prime Minister’s House, Supreme Court, National Library, etc. On the other side of the road stand science buildings bearing names such as Pakistan Academy of Sciences, Pakistan Science Foundation, Islamic Academy of Sciences, Pakistan Council for Science and Technology, Committee on S&T of Organisation of Islamic Countries (Comstech), Commission on S&T for Sustainable Development in the South (Comsats) and others. A short distance from the Presidency is the head office of the PAEC, the largest single science-based institution in the country. About two miles away, on the campus of Quaid-i-Azam University is the National Centre for Physics (NCP).

Were any or all of these grand buildings to vanish suddenly into thin air, the world of science would simply shrug its shoulders. Shiny new cars parked in their driveways radiate opulence — a tragic waste of resources. So-called science ‘incubators’ in various cities have also proved ineffective. These were supposed to create new products for industry and business as well as new ideas for the world of academia. Nothing is visible. Do we need to spend more money doing this? Can we not understand that chickens may need incubators, but ideas hatch inside the head?

Second, we need to see through the numbers game that was started by the HEC in 2002, and immediately dispense with it. This game had deceived Pakistanis into believing that scientific research had increased when, in fact, the opposite happened.

More ‘research’ papers and PhDs, and more universities and institutes do not at all translate into actual progress unless certain requirements are met. The most important of these are academic integrity and accurate assessment of scientific worth. As a result of incentivising corruption through cash rewards for papers and grants of PhD degrees, integrity has precipitously declined.

THE WAY FORWARD

The state of science in Pakistan, 75 years down the line, is visibly poor. There is little public understanding of science, our exports are largely low-tech textiles and raw materials, all significant weapons systems are imported, the space programme has almost ceased to exist, and scientific research carried out in universities and institutes carries little credibility or usefulness.

It is futile to blame a particular government; between one government and another, there has been little difference. The collective worldview, or *weltanschauung*, is at the core of the failure. This grim situation should energise us to drastically change our course. This must begin with changing the content and quality of education, beginning at the school level and then upward.

Instead of stuffing minds with propaganda, the goal must be to enhance cognitive capacity and

creativity. How this can be done is well known: we can simply copy one of many successful countries. Attitudes acquired in school carry over to all higher levels — colleges, universities, research institutes, and every other organisation. Good education encourages questioning and seeking answers. Traditional education, on the other hand, lulls the mind into passivity by endless memorisation and repetition.

As they say, to make an omelette, you must first break an egg. That egg, in Pakistan’s context, is the traditional value system that clashes with the value system of modernity and science. Pakistan hungers for the fruits of science, but a massive upsurge of zealotry has rendered it attitudinally unfit for nurturing science. Unlike its products, science cannot be acquired without accepting the fundamental premise of strict objectivity and, above all, the scientific method. Yes, it is as plain as that — take it or leave it.

The author is an Islamabad-based physicist and writer.

ROLLERCOASTER RIDE FOR TEAM PAKISTAN

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his enormous all-round talent, and turned Imran Khan into Pakistan’s first truly fast bowler with the venom that terrorised his opponents in later years. And, of course, he brought into the national fold a young lad named Javed Miandad.

In hockey, the mid-1970s was when the team had a realistic chance of clinching the gold whenever and wherever it contested. It all peaked quite nicely in 1978 when Pakistan, in a rare bilateral interaction with India, defeated the archrival 3-1 in a four-match series during which two games were played in India. In Karachi, Pakistan defeated India with an unprecedented 6-0 scoreline.

Pakistan was flying high with gold medals at the World Cup, the Asian Games and the Champions Trophy. To be the national captain at the time, which I was lucky enough to be, was a matter of honour and pride. The only piece missing from the trophy cabinet was the Olympics title, and there was every chance to grab it at the 1980 edition in Moscow. We were never closer to a true grand slam in hockey, but that was not to be because Pakistan decided to boycott the games for reasons that had nothing to do with sports at large.

During 1978, Pakistan also made advances in sailing, with Byram D. Avari and Munir Sadiq picking up gold at the Asian Games; a feat that Byram subsequently repeated with his wife Goshpi.

The biggest champion that all this energy of the 1970s produced was the legendary Jahangir Khan who became the youngest squash player in history to win the World Open Championship in 1981. At the age of 17, he announced his arrival on the international stage in style, ending the long reign of Australia’s Geoff Hunt.

Between 1981 and 1986, he recorded the longest winning streak in any sport, remaining undefeated in 555 consecutive matches played over five years and eight months.

By the time he hung his boots, he had six World Open and 10 consecutive British Open titles to his credit.

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Aik connection MORE Se Zyada passion

Har ba ikhtyar Pakistani Ko 75 saala Azaadi Ka Jashn Mubarak

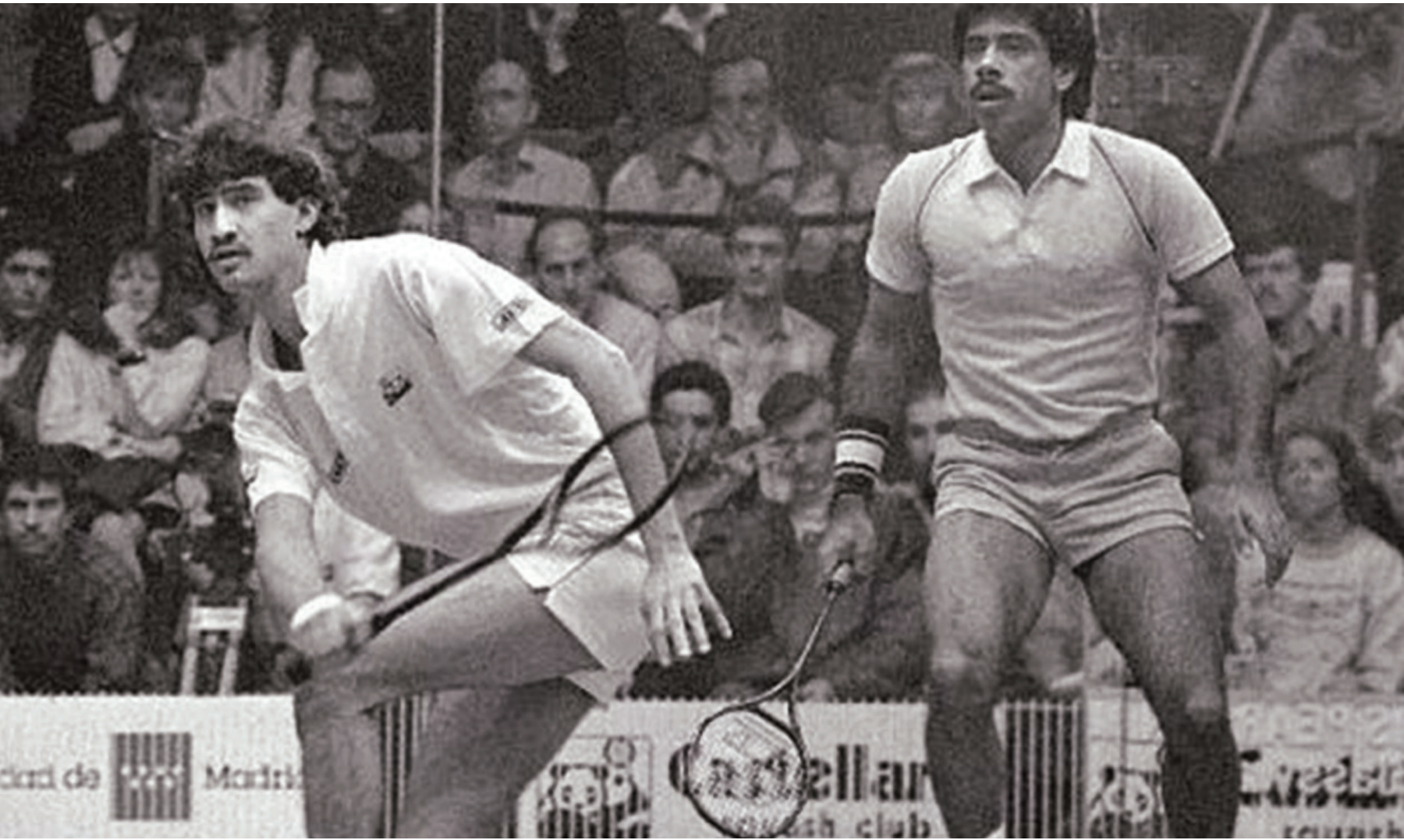


Photo: Dawn Archives

In the latter half of 1980s, it was almost customary to find Jahangir Khan battling it out in tournament finals against compatriot Jansher Khan.

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JAHANGIR: THE ULTIMATE CHAMPION

In the latter half of 1980s, it was almost customary to find Jahangir battling it out in tournament finals against compatriot Jansher Khan who ended with eight World Open and six British Open titles of his own, having remained the World No 1 for a record 513 weeks, which is just seven weeks shy of a decade; from 1988 to 1998.

Coinciding with the exploits in squash was Pakistan’s last hurrah in hockey and the Olympics at large. Of the 10 Olympics medals ever won by Pakistan, eight have been in hockey; the only two exceptions being wrestler Mohammad Bashir in 1960 and boxer Syed Hussain Shah in 1988. Our last Olympics title came in 1984, and the last podium finish was a bronze in 1992. The last World Cup and Champions Trophy gold came in 1994. Over the last quarter of a century, we first had to face the ignominy of playing qualifying rounds for global tiles before facing the ultimate humiliation of failing to qualify for the main round.

At the Asian Games, where the competition is less stiff, the last gold came in 2010, and the last podium finish in 2014, but this is nothing compared to our complete ascendancy till 1990 when we brought back seven gold and two silver in the first nine editions.

Overall, of the 204 medals Pakistan has won at the Asian Games in various disciplines, 170 came in the first 12 editions that were held till 1998 compared to only 34 since the turn of the century.

The year 1994 was an amazing one for Pakistan as it simultaneously held the title of World Champions in four different arenas; two each in team events – Cricket and Hockey, and two in individual outings – Jansher Khan in squash and Muhammad Yousaf in snooker. As if all this was not enough, Pakistan Veterans also clinched the Masters Hockey World Cup that was held in Australia. That was a memorable year at many levels, but in the last quarter of a century, things have generally been downhill.

The only big news, for instance, in Pakistan hockey in that time relates to penalty corner specialist Sohail Abbas. In 1999, he scored the highest number of goals in a calendar year, netting 60 times. In 2004, he scored his 268th goal to break the record for most international goals by a player. He later became the first player in the history of international hockey to score more than 300 goals for his national side, and ended his career as the highest penalty corner converter with 348 goals. Known for his raw power and drag-flicks, he was also the fastest to score 100 and 200 goals, and also holds the almost unbeatable record of one double hat trick and 21 hat tricks in international hockey.

The fact that the team could not make it big despite the heroics of Sohail Abbas says a lot about the magnitude of the decline. On its part, the national cricket outfit has pretty much been the saviour despite crowning itself as the most unpredictable side in the game. The iconic win at the World Cup in 1992 under Imran Khan was followed by the T20 title under Younis Khan in 2009, the ICC Test Championship in 2016 with Misbahul Haq as the skipper, and the Champions Trophy in 2017 with Sarfaraz Ahmed leading the side.

It is also in cricket that Pakistani women have been able to make their most prominent strides forward compared to any other sporting arena. Though it remains a side in infancy, Pakistan women’s team did clinch the gold at Asian Games in 2010 and 2014.

We cannot shy away from the fact that it is also in cricket, incidentally, that the nation has suffered its biggest embarrassment. While one can live with being an inconsistent outfit, the repulsive sleaze and scorn that surrounded the two match-fixing scams over the years tarnished the nation’s image rather badly.

As can be seen, the overall decline in sports, quite regrettably, has been as spectacular as the success had once been. In none of the sports, the national flag is fluttering the way it used to be. And this is here where the stream of sports joins the larger flow of our national life. The malaise is the same; a lack of system.

Take education, health, economy, governance, anything; characteristics of the system remain very much the same: absence of institutions, absence of accountability, ad-hocism, nepotism, across-the-board frivolity, lack of understanding, and, on top of it all, a serious lack of intent to understand, perform and deliver. The only difference in the realm of sports is that, unlike most other sectors, it has an easy scapegoat; the players who take the flak while the administrators continue to make hey because for them the sun continues to shine.

The thread running through all the success stories was that of individual talent. From Hashim and

Roshan to Jahangir and Jansher, none was thrown up by the system. The same is the story with any game you choose to look at.

I wonder how many in the country today would know or be able to recall the name Zia Mahmood. He was a star in his own right who took a largely unknown squad from Pakistan to take runners-up position at the 1981 Bermuda Bowl World Bridge Championships in New York, and then again at the Rosenblum Cup in Miami in 1986. During the decade, he led Pakistan to five consecutive Bridge Federation Asia Middle East Bridge (BEFAME) titles. In 1997, however, he was at the World Team Championships in Tunisia, representing not Pakistan, but the United States where he had dropped anchor just as Hashim Khan had done later in his life.

Aisamul Haq, who has been our lone and impressive representative on the international tennis circuit, is no exception on this count. The federation concerned can surely take no credit at all for what Aisam has been able to achieve on the circuit; –18 ATP titles and two appearances in the US Open finals.

More recently, we have had our heroes coming from the world of snooker and mountaineering. After the exploits of Muhammad Yousaf in snooker, the national flag has been kept triumphantly aloft by the likes of Mohammad Asif, Babar Masih, Mohammad Sajjad and Ahsan Ramzan.

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

In mountaineering, the ball was set rolling by Nazir Sabir, who became the first Pakistani to climb Mount Everest in the year 2000. More recently Muhammad Ali Sadpara captured the attention of the whole nation. Shehroze Kashif and Sirbaz Khan have done their own wonders, and so have Samina Khayal Baig and Naila Kiani.

At the 2020 Olympics, weightlifter Talha Talib and javelin-thrower Arshad Nadeem came close to putting Pakistan on the medals table. Though they could not in the end, their performance was remarkable because it had no official backing. These are all tales of individual enterprise and brilliance that came to fore despite the system; not because of it.

There has never been any concrete effort to have a system that may harness the natural talent. Even the highest offices in the land poke their mighty nose in the affairs of various federations and associations, but all that is done for the sake of accommodating the blue-eyed. Beyond that, there is little concern for anything else. The net result is that instead of producing giants, the federations are churning out pygmies and using them as scapegoats to continue enjoying the goodies themselves.

Had the decline been confined to one area, we could have called it bad performance. Had it been so bad in a few games, we could have called it a coincidence. But the scale of the decline is no coincidence. The malaise definitely runs much deeper and wider. And it is the same malady that plagues us as a nation. There are ways to stop the rot, but if we don’t do it now, Pakistan sports may well suffer an implosion. And what a sad day it will be.

Let us all do what we can individually and collectively do to avert such a grave possibility. Let’s do it for the sake of our coming generations. Let them feel the pride that we did in our better days.

The writer is a former captain, coach and manager of the national hockey team who became a sports columnist after retirement.

URDU HAS AN IDENTITY OF ITS OWN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 52

the rise of symbolism and deliberate obscurantism in Pakistani literature. Some insist that even the trend of writing plot-less short stories from 1960 onwards owed much to martial law as it was a means of avoiding the restrictions imposed by the censor. However, there is no dearth of those who disagree and think symbolism and modernism would have come to Pakistan anyhow, and that it was a mere coincidence that they arrived after the imposition of the martial law.

Modernism arrived in Pakistan quite late, but when it did, everybody noticed. Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq, a literary circle that supported aesthetic values and backed the notion of literature for the sake of literature, played a vital role in the propagation of modernism.

Progressives perceived the Halqa as a regressive force because the latter never showed any political tendencies expressly, at least in its early phase. On its part, the Halqa did not favour the utilitarian concept of literature that the progressives prac-

tised. Halqa’s literary gatherings were open to all schools of thought and the discussion used to be lively, to put it mildly.

The desire to say something modern and different resulted in a poetic movement in the 1960s. Rising from Lahore, the Nai Shaeri Ki Tehreek, or the New Poetry Movement, was the brainchild of Iftikhar Jalib, Anees Nagi, Zahid Dar and some others. Though the movement claimed to be a forum for “new linguistic formations”, its founders could not practically show in their writings what they meant by it.

It was left to Zafar Iqbal to skilfully demonstrate what new diction was and how a new language could say different things in new ways. Zafar Iqbal, and some of his followers, intentionally created a new version of ‘Pakistani Urdu’, devising new verbs by modifying nouns and blending the words from local languages. This contribution to Urdu poetry and language has been much underrated.

The Progressive camp emphasised the theme of literature, while the Halqa favoured form. Some critics rejected both theme and form, arguing that the division was unnecessary as new linguistic formation covered both, presenting the “truth in totality”. Such critics were inspired by the theory of logical positivism, too. The proponents of this group were well aware of modern Western critical and linguistic theories and behind their ideas of a new diction and new poetry one can trace the influence of critical theories of structuralism and modernism.

Taking a cue from James Joyce and William Faulkner, they insisted on deviating from traditional patterns of language as ruled by grammar and dictionary. It was, in a way, the impact of modernism and tucked in somewhere were the influences of abstractionism and surrealism. Though the movement largely failed to deliver what it promised, it can never be overlooked as it left its mark on Urdu literature, criticism and language.

Arguments generated by the supporters of Askari prompted a wave of questions regarding Pakistani or Islamic literature. If Pakistan was to be treated as a political and geographical unit, what its cultural identity will be, considering its multilingual characteristics and subcultures, they wondered. Many asked if cultural identity included local rituals, values, folk literature and customs, and the issue of the civilisations of Mohenjodaro and Taxila was also raised.

Some questions were partially answered and some remain unanswered even today, but the debate paved the way for some brainstorming. While some progressives, like Qasmi, for instance, gave a balanced point of view and said that our culture was Indo-Islamic in essence as there was definitely some influence of Islam on Pakistani culture, and our ancient heritage, too, was a part of it, others showed their displeasure.

There were some other critics who elaborated the theories of postmodernism, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstructionism, feminism and, in recent times, post-colonialism. With post-modern theories beginning to reverberate in Urdu criticism written in India in the 1970s, in Pakistan’s literary circles it began in late 1980s and early 1990s. Some literary journals, like *Funoon*, *Auraag*, *Daryaft* and *Sareer*, played a pivotal role in popularising these critical theories.

While all these debates continue to make waves, there was a marked surge in patriotic feelings and its reflection in Urdu literature in the wake of the 1965 and 1971 Pakistan-India wars. In poetry and fiction written in Pakistan against this backdrop, a profound sense of belonging to the land and its love was recorded. The unprecedented euphoria gave way to the agonies of the fall of East Pakistan in 1971. Pakistani writers and poets expressed their views in the 1970s and 1980s on the tragedy artistically in their writings, mourning the dead and bewailing the living.

TRENDS AND GENRES

The 1990s witnessed a surge in feministic critical theories and some women poets and critics, especially Kishwar Naheed, Fahmida Riaz and Fatema Hasan, who made major and impressive contributions.

Another phenomenon that became quite noticeable was a fuller role for female writers and poets. Not only a large number of women poets and writers began to shine brightly on the literary horizon, but in many fields they outshone their male counterparts, especially when it comes to Urdu novels. Many of the best Urdu novels written in Pakistan during 1960s and 1970s were penned by women writers.

As for the literary genres, unprecedented progress has been noted over the years in Pakistan. For instance, Urdu short story, or *afsaana*, offers some very fine examples of the art and craft of

short story. Similarly, Urdu novel attained new heights in Pakistan.

An interesting case study is that of Urdu *ghazal*. In fact, had *nazm*, the modern poem, not challenged its supremacy, *ghazal* would have still been the most popular genre. But *ghazal* did come under threat for a while, and there were times when it seemed that *nazm* would replace it as the preferred form.

In the pre-independence phase, Allama Iqbal gave Urdu *ghazal* a makeover, and the post-independence *ghazal* embraced the realities of a changing world: its diction, themes, symbols and vocabulary all went through a great transformation, and social and political issues began to appear in it. The best use of it was made by Faiz, who subtly used the traditional metaphors and symbols to convey a political message. In doing so, he revived the art form and gave it the energy to fight off the threat posed by *nazm*.

RURAL MILIEU

An oft-repeated lament is about the lack of depiction of rural milieu in Urdu literature in general. and in Pakistani Urdu literature in particular. It is a fact that many of the writers and poets come from the educated urban middle class and they portray the issues related mostly to what they experience in real life. But there are some who have painted Pakistan’s rural scene with accuracy and a peculiar local diction. For instance, Majeed Amjad and Sher Afzal Jafri in their poetry recorded Pakistan’s rural milieu with its sights and sounds.

Qasmi’s short stories captured the villages of Punjab, but many of his stories set in rural background were written in the 1940s and 1950s. Shaukat Siddiqi’s *Jangloos* reflects the people, language and cultures of Pakistan, particularly the rural areas in relatively modern times. Others who captured the essence of rural Pakistan include Jameela Hashmi, Abdullah Hussain and Ghulam-us-Saqlain Naqvi.

Majeed Lahori, Mushtaq Ahmed Yousufi, Mohammad Khalid Akhtar and Asad Mohammad Khan successfully captured in their prose Karachi’s local colours and its multiethnic cultural peculiarities. Intizar Hussain’s *Aage Samandar Hai* was able to highlight the megacity’s ethnic problem.

In conclusion, Urdu literature produced over the last 75 years in Pakistan has been deeply influenced by the local stimuli. Pakistani nationalism is pretty ingrained in our literary output.

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STELLAR SUCCESSES, BROKEN DREAMS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

Indian films kept cinema houses running...” he says.

In 1948, when Pakistan’s first film, *Teri Yaad*, was finally released, it flopped badly. Only a handful of films came out the following year, and those, too, could not impress at the box office. This spell of unsuccessful films was broken by *Pheray* (1949). Gazdar notes that the film that was made on a shoestring budget of Rs65,000 went on to become the first film produced in Pakistan to celebrate a silver jubilee; running for 25 weeks.

However, with limited funds and outdated equipment and facilities, there were many challenges faced by the industry developing in Lahore. A big one was the lack of bankable film stars. “Except for Noor Jehan, all the others who came from Bombay and Calcutta were either veterans, good only for character roles, or those whose careers were on the decline,” Gazdar writes.

With time, stars were discovered and made. By 1956, according to Gazdar, “Pakistani cinema emerged from the debris of social, political and economic catastrophe.”

ACT II: HIGHS AND LOWS

Gazdar calls 1957-66, “A decade of reformation”. A lot was happening on the political front at the time, and cinema was not immune to these developments and disturbances. In 1954, *Roohi* became the first Pakistani film to be banned “on the charges of creating class hate ...” This was only the beginning of state interference and curbs on free expression. After the first martial law, censorship became more common, and Ayub Khan started using documentary films as a tool for government propaganda.

But even in the face of censorship, the industry continued developing. *Naila* (1965) became the first successful colour film in Pakistan. *Armaan* (1966) “claimed its place as the first platinum jubilee (75-week run) movie of Pakistan,” writes Gazdar. It also launched Waheed Murad and Zeba into superstardom.

As the 1970s arrived, tensions remained high. Regimes changed. And Bangladesh was created. All of this had an impact on cinema. Seeing the industry struggling, the government organised a seminar in 1973 to establish the National Film Development Corporation (Nafdec). But Nafdec and a fund set aside for it, Gazdar observes, failed to give “anything tangible to the film industry”.

In more encouraging developments, the 1970s saw the rise of Sultan Rahi, an ordinary-looking man who became an unparalleled star. Rahi received legendary status when his film *Maula Jatt* (1979) was released during martial law. Rahi’s everyman hero even fought bans that were placed on the film for being too violent (by a regime that carried out public floggings).

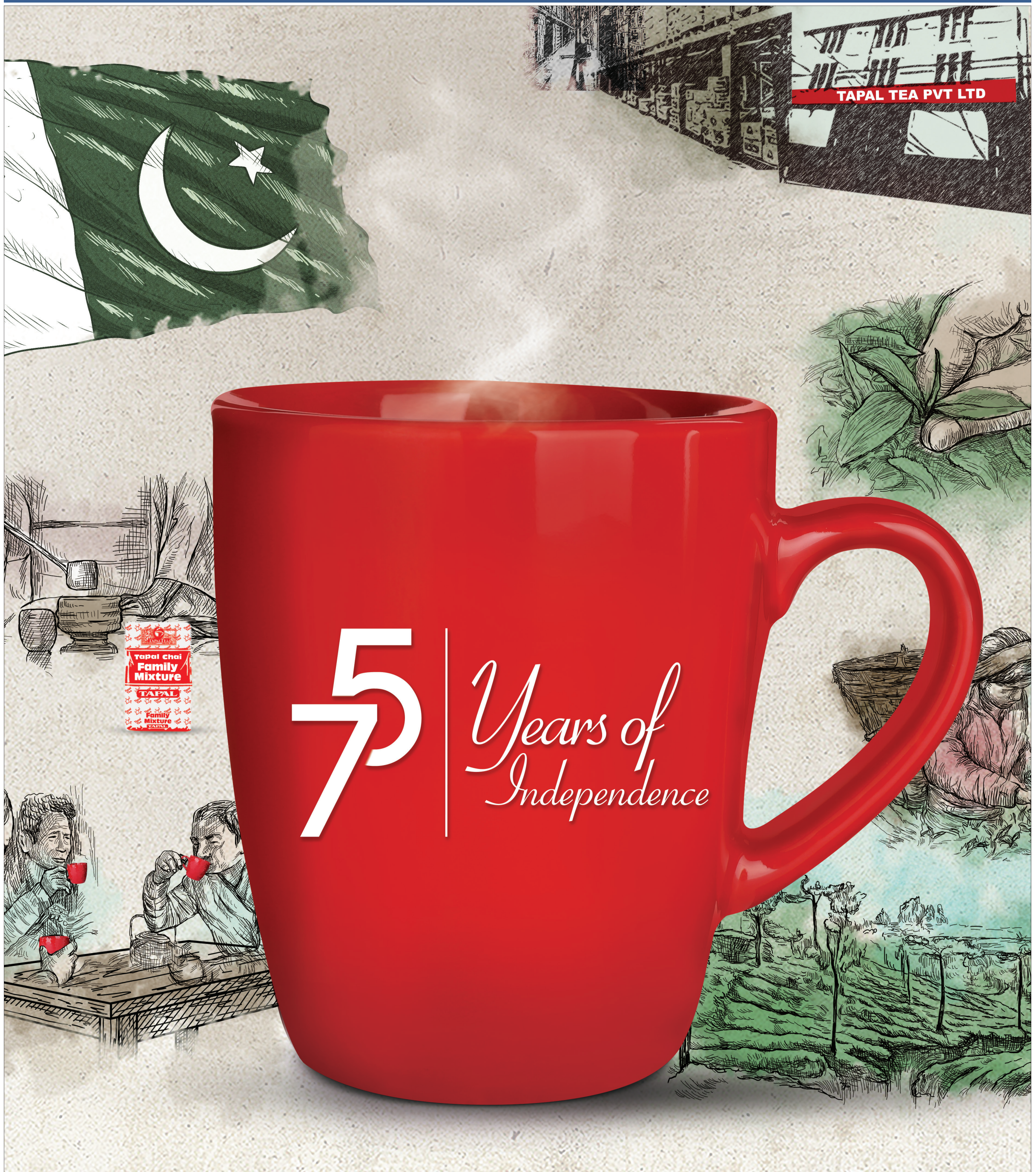
Zia’s imprint on cinema and society has been well documented. This was felt even in the 1990s when watching pirated films at home became the norm, and cinemas started to be seen as family-unfriendly places for *sasti masti* (cheap thrills).

ACT III: RISING FROM THE ASHES

The early 2000s saw a boom in television channels. And eventually, with this boom came talk of ‘reviving’ the film industry. Shoaib Mansoor’s *Khud Ke Liye* (2007) and *Bol* (2011) were among the first films that managed to bring urban audiences back to the theatres. Undoubtedly, the lifting of a decades-long Bollywood ban and the rise of the multiplex culture also helped.

In 2013, Bilal Lashari’s *Waar* went on to become a blockbuster. We have seen more patriotic films and drama productions since then, many of which have been supported by the ISPR.

The same year, Meenu Gaur and Farzad Nabi’s *Zinda Bhaag* became Pakistan’s first entry in 50 years for the Foreign Film category at the Oscars. The



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TAPAL
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filmmakers paid homage to the dying Lollywood industry. Their marketing included hand-painted artwork by Sarfaraz Iqbal, the last surviving artist of the film poster industry. When industries die or relocate, thousands are rendered jobless.

Over time, the industry has moved to Karachi, where all the major television channels are run from. Bigger budget films, produced by television giants and media houses, have become more common. These have included commercial successes, such as *Jawani Phir Nahi Ani* (2015).

Independent filmmakers have continued to make waves internationally, too. Documentary filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy has won multiple Academy Awards and Emmys. And Saim Sadiq recently made history with his film *Joyland* becoming Pakistan’s first official selection at Cannes.

Still, today’s filmmakers are fighting familiar battles. Sarmad Sultan Khoosat, who co-produced *Joyland*, had to face a ban on his film *Zindagi Tamasha*. The film, which premiered at the Busan International Film Festival, is yet to be shown at home.

The debate that producers are currently having about fighting for screens with international films and the counterpoints being presented is the same “tug of war” (as Gazdar calls it) that the filmmakers and distributors were having in 1949.

Censorship, bans and limited support and funding opportunities continue to rob filmmakers of the opportunity to truly realise their potential. The number of films produced remains low, as does the footfall at cinemas, which have been struggling even more since the pandemic.

Manto’s assessment of the state of the industry remains apt decades later. “If they [film companies] proceeded sensibly and there is at least a partial reduction in the government’s neglect, there might just be grounds for optimism,” he wrote. “Life could be breathed into a film industry, which, once resuscitated, would be in a position to stand on its own two feet.”

As French critic Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr said, the more things change, the more they remain the same. Simply put, that is the story of Pakistan’s film industry.

The writer is a visual artist and filmmaker.

OUR EXTRAORDINARY MUSIC MAKERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 54

their popular repertoire originates in this period.

Some of the prominent composers from this era include Master Ghulam Haider, Khwaja Khurshed Anwar, Feroze Nizami, Rashid Attre, Master Inayat, and Nisar Bazmi. The group of female singers who recorded those great melodies was led by Madam Noor Jehan and included Nasim Begum, Munawar Sultana, Zubaida Khanum and Naheed Niazi. The male singers included Salim Raza, Muneer Husain, Ahmed Rushdi, Mujeeb Alam and of course the remarkable maestro, Mehdi Hasan.

The decade of the 1980s that followed also produced some great film music, but this period is also remembered as the twilight of the film industry of Pakistan and consequently of film music. New films are being released even today, but with nowhere near the frequency of the 1960s and the 1970s. The format of the films has also significantly moved away from the one first formulated by Agha Hashr, and this shift has resulted in the relegation of music to a secondary position. Film music seldom appeals strongly to discerning listeners. The 1980s also witnessed a new emphasis on the creation of non-film music.

ROLE OF RADIO PAKISTAN, PTV

The launch of All-India Radio in 1936 had facilitated new commercial opportunities for musicians. Similarly, from 1947 onwards, Radio Pakistan played a substantive role in providing a livelihood for accomplished musicians. Music occupied a larger part of Radio Pakistan’s programming than even news and current affairs. Apart from radio plays, Radio Pakistan broadcast other forms of storytelling formats often interspersed with songs titled *geeton bhari kahani*. Radio also institutionalised the creation of new musical content by setting up a special department referred to as the Central Production Unit (CPU), which employed musicians as part of in-house ensembles.

The CPU, mainly in Lahore and Karachi, is credited with the production of exceptional music, including popular ghazals by Mehdi Hasan, such as *Gulon mein rang bharey*, and the music of Reshma, Farida Khanum, Iqbal Bano and several other significant singers, which is now an integral part of our cultural heritage. One such example is *Bandar Road se Keamari* by Ahmed Rushdi, who launched his career at the Karachi CPU.

The launch of Pakistan Television (PTV) in the mid-1960s witnessed the creation of another institution that made a monumental contribution to the development of Pakistani music. The contribution of television is praiseworthy for the space it provided to regional music. Dozens of major musical artists were featured in its programmes, and among the voices introduced were Nayyara Noor and the pop sensation Alamgir.

One other institution contributed hugely to the development and promotion of music. This was a multinational music publishing company, EMI which was led by Syed Mansoor Bokhari. The efforts of his team, of which I was lucky enough to be a part, did serious work in the early 1980s to compensate for the progressive deterioration of film music. The new wave of music that emerged from EMI included Nazia & Zoheb’s *Disco Deewane*, Western-style rock bands Vital Signs, Junoon and Strings as well as Sajjad Ali and Ali Haider. Many of these performers became household names and their music particularly resonated with younger listeners who had no memory of old-fashioned film music.

One of the outstanding contributions of EMI was to document and record the major remaining classical vocalists in the late 1970s as part of a path-breaking series of 30 albums, titled *Ahang-i-Khusravi*. This ambitious anthology of our classical tradition was conceived in two parts. The first part contained 20 albums and was titled *Gharanon ke Gaiki*, while the second part contained 10 albums titled *Raag Mala*, which explained the structure and vocalisation of 99 different ragas, with commentary by the famed musical composer Khwaja Khurshid Anwar.

The basic concept of this remarkable collection of music was discussed between Sahib and the leading poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz. According to Syed Mansoor Bokhari, he received a call from Faiz, in which the latter insisted that this work “needs to be



Photo: Dawn Archives

Habib Jalib, a poet known for his revolutionary zeal, is seen here under attack by policemen during a demonstration in Lahore 1983 against the martial law regime of General Ziaul Haq.

done”, and that was how it all began. *Ahang-i-Khusravi* remains an important reference point for future generations of musicians in Pakistan who wish to pursue classical music.

I strongly feel that the excellent work Radio Pakistan and PTV initiated in the earlier decades is not fully appreciated, or even understood, today. Their contribution to the development and promotion of Pakistan’s music and culture cannot be overstated.

As part of the Ministry of Information, these organisations have apparently failed to meet their originally designed ‘core’ objectives, and have now been limited largely to the dissemination of political messaging.

I end the narrative with a couplet from Allama Iqbal:

مجھے آہ و فغانِ نیم شب کا پھر پیام آیا
قلم اے رہو کہ شاید پھر کوئی مشکل مقام آیا

(Once again, at the dead of night, I hear grieving voices cry out.
O Traveller, pause and reflect. We live in difficult times.)

The writer is a famed music composer.

A ROBUST CULTURAL MOSAIC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

but more so in the latter, spurred by facilitated consumerism and social media connectivity. This facet of the country’s culture exudes a striking mix of conservatism and creeping modernity.

THE RELIGION-BASED APPROACH

There are different strands within the religion-based approach to culture. The balanced perspective was best represented by scholars, such as Fazlur Rahman in the 1950s and early 1960s, and about 40 years later by Javed Ghamidi. It is a sad, telling truth that both these enlightened intellectuals had to leave Pakistan due to death threats.

The imbalanced view interprets Islam in medieval, insular terms. Unable to cope with the exponential growth and speed of new knowledge, technology and change, this perspective, in turn, features variations on the theme. From the extreme of seeing the shuttlecock *burqa* as compulsory to make women invisible, to tolerating questions from non-*burqa*-clad women on TV shows, from judging everything Western, Christian and Jewish to be inherently anti-Islamic to reluctantly accepting birth spacing as a legitimate form of family planning, from being unable to secure more than a small percentage of votes in 11 general elections since 1970 to wielding disproportionate influence on the state and government, the religion-driven approach has made its most superfluous contributions in the government-school educational sector and by brain-washing youth in non-governmental seminaries.

Permitted to exhibit undue sound and fury, this approach bullied its way into the formulation of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) and blocked the adoption of a bill in the National Assembly to prohibit early child marriage.

Official versions of acknowledging religion-related aspects in all public events are notable. A few years ago, Nawaz Sharif’s son-in-law, an MNA, moved a resolution in the National Assembly to make the rendering of *naats* mandatory after *tilawat*, and before the start of each sitting. Also often, one now hears *naats* being played inside PIA aircraft before take-off and after landing, to replace music. With interruptions for making announcements by the cabin crew, and with people having their routine ‘worldly’ conversations, the playing of the *naats* actually becomes a disrespectful practice.

Fortunately, though many Muslims have succumbed to wearing their religion on their sleeves, the large mass of Pakistanis remains mindful of all faiths, and is refreshingly cosmopolitan.

THE MODERNIST PERSPECTIVE

The modernist approach to culture also contains a variety within, but, in principle, it is secular, without using that word because the religious lobby has deliberately mistranslated the word in Urdu as being *laadeeniya*” (without faith; atheism). It is apt to recall Allama Iqbal’s insightful observation during his lectures on *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*: “All that is secular is deeply sacred at the roots of its being.”

Modernism is simply a form of pragmatism, a recognition of objective reality and radical change in a rapidly transforming world. That does not require a wholesale abandonment of tradition or belief, but only to encourage a reappraisal of primitive customs and practices which suppress women’s and children’s rights in particular under the guise of honour and religion.

Segments of the legislatures, particularly in Sindh, as well as media, civil society, armed forces, intellectual discourse, the private sector, and even elements of the public sector, like certain centres of excellence in universities, either forthrightly or cautiously apply the modernist approach in law-making, in cultural practices and in social conduct. To summarise, our negative sub-cultural traits

include sloth, squalor, emotive inability to conduct candid discussion on religion, bribery, self-abnegation, a virtually separate culture in cantonments, traffic indiscipline, misogyny, suppression of women’s and children’s rights, insensitivity towards non-Muslims, neglect of ancient monuments, sites, disregard of animals, and apathy towards ecology.

The positive traits include extraordinary compassion, generous charity, friendliness, warm hospitality, being helpful, democratic-minded as evident by elections held year-round for professional associations, chambers of commerce and industry, private clubs, even *mohalla* committees, readiness to adopt/consume new products, lifestyles, risk-taking, adventurous, brashly brave, ready to give blood to the ill and for the country, and, despite adversity, a blind faith that tomorrow will be better than today.

With a vast history still only partly explored and poorly transmitted to new generations, Pakistan’s culture at 75 is evolving robustly. It is a composite of widely contrasting features and trends that have already become distinct and which will most likely deepen and mature in the times to come.

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THE CHALLENGE OF RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

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to mobilise on a single platform and formed the Women’s Action Forum (WAF). Demonstrations held against the punishment given to the young couple and the attention paid by international media produces results when the said judgement was overturned.

It must be noted that WAF’s protest demonstrations were among the few public shows of opposition to the military regime. This, too, at a time when demonstrators could be jailed, fined or whipped. Later, similar protests also helped save many women from harsh punishments passed under the Zina Ordinance. However, the majority of women in Pakistan’s prisons during Zia’s time were those convicted of adultery.

Protests by WAF also helped water down the impact of the Law of Evidence. The protests that began in Lahore on Feb 12, 1983, were harshly handled by Punjab police and many women were dragged off to prison. In a belated tribute by the state, Feb 12 is now observed as the National Women’s Day in Pakistan. It should also be acknowledged that the first initiative for women’s rights and improving their status was taken by the All-Pakistan Women’s Association (Apwa), led by Begum Ra’ana Liaquat Ali Khan. Apwa successfully campaigned to bring about improvements in the Family Laws Ordinance, 1962, giving women more security in marriage.

HRCP’S WORK

In 1986 the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) was set up to address the increasing violation of wide-ranging rights under the Zia regime. The initiative came from the platform of the Ghulam Jilani Foundation, and the movers were the sisters Asma and Hina Jilani. Apart from them, the founding members of HRCP included highly respected names from the judiciary, law and the media. Retired Justice Dorab Patel, known for his liberal values and adherence to rule of law, became the first chairperson of the Commission, while Asma Jahangir was the first secretary-general.

The first fact-finding mission that HRCP undertook was in 1986 to the villages of Sindh that had suffered the repercussions of resistance to the Zia regime. From its inception, HRCP set a unique work and organisational model for itself. It chose to be a broad-based membership organisation with its council (or board) elected every three years by a general body representative of people at the grassroots. It reached out to local communities through a network of core groups across the country that reported and worked (voluntarily) for the Commission from their respective areas. It was the grassroots contact that many at the top of HRCP’s leadership continued to maintain which actually resulted in greater awareness of fundamental rights.

As the country’s first and only broad-based human rights NGO, HRCP’s mandate is wide and, at times, appears to be unwieldy. However, the Commission has chosen to focus more on issues that do not have popular support and are generally considered sensitive.

Foremost among these is the sustained campaign against the death penalty and while the country is far from accepting abolition, recent years have seen a decline in executions. It should be noted that following the lifting of the moratorium on death penalty in 2014, Pakistan saw one the highest execution rates in the world over the next few years. Other primary concerns on which HRCP has consistently focussed on are the status and rights of minorities and the phenomenon of enforced disappearances.

NOT A MOMENT’S REST

It can be said with conviction that Pakistan’s human rights situation never gives any activist a

moment’s rest. Shortly after HRCP’s formation, the distressing status of bonded brick kiln labour came to its attention when an escapee from a brickfield rushed into Asma’s office, asking for help. Less than a year later, some bonded agricultural workers reached HRCP’s Hyderabad office, narrating a similar ordeal.

When HRCP began to investigate, the magnitude of the problem of bonded labour appeared overwhelming; many of those in bondage were women and children. Since bonded labour was outlawed in 1992, the Commission succeeded through the courts to have thousands of peasants freed.

Some years later, with HRCP’s sustained campaign, the freed bonded labourers felt empowered enough to form their own association and began to approach courts themselves. Similarly, the past decades have seen a rise in rights-based organisations focussing on specific areas of concern.

The activism that these rights-based organisations generated, as well as the inter-connectedness of the world put pressure on successive Pakistani governments to sign and ratify significant UN charters and conventions. While Pakistan was among the first countries to sign the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it would be many decades before the governments would commit to the UN charters and conventions that followed.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was signed in 1990 with reservations over the definition of a child. However, Pakistan continues to default on its commitments. No child labour survey has been undertaken in decades and children remain employed in hazardous industries, including mining. Sexual violence against children has also come to light in recent years, with Kasur identified as one of the main centres for child pornography.

The Convention to End all forms of Discrimination Against Women (Cedaw) was signed by the government of Benazir Bhutto in 1996 after considerable pressure from women’s rights groups. Similarly, Pakistan signed the Convention Against Torture in April 2008 and ratified it in June 2010. However, it appears that torture and extrajudicial killings remain a method of choice for law-enforcers, with a notorious police inspector in Karachi proudly admitting to killing hundreds in fake encounters. Pakistan also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in June 2010.

THE DISAPPEARED

So far, the government has resisted signing the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. In fact, successive governments have failed to address effectively the issue of enforced disappearances which first came to light following Pakistan’s support of the US ‘war on terror’ in 2001.

Initially, most of the victims were from the then Fata or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, with the military action against Akbar Bugti in 2006 and the rise of Baloch resistance, cases of the people going ‘missing’ became rampant. In February 2007, HRCP approached the Supreme Court with a verified list of the missing. The removal of the chief justice a few months later by the Musharraf regime was a setback for the petition though the CJ, on being restored, continued to hear separate cases before recommending the setting up of a Commission of Enquiry on Enforced Disappearances.

The body may have succeeded in getting a few thousand people traced, but it never earned the trust of the families whose members were forcibly disappeared. Families of the missing, particularly from Balochistan, have been protesting for years with little or ineffective response from the state.

In the face of repression and gross violations of rights, Pakistanis have historically shown a strong streak of resistance and resilience. If one were to look at the history of the human rights movement in Pakistan, two names stand out — the late Asma Jahangir and I.A. Rehman. Through their leadership and commitment, they practically became the face of the rights movement in Pakistan, with the most vulnerable reaching out to them without any hesitation, confident that they will be heard.

Apart from the loss of such stalwarts, the human rights movement is also increasingly coming under pressure from the state which is creating a hostile environment. The process of registering and continuing to function has been made extremely difficult for civil society organisations. Moreover, frequent visits from officials of various intelligence agencies create a sense of fear and harassment.

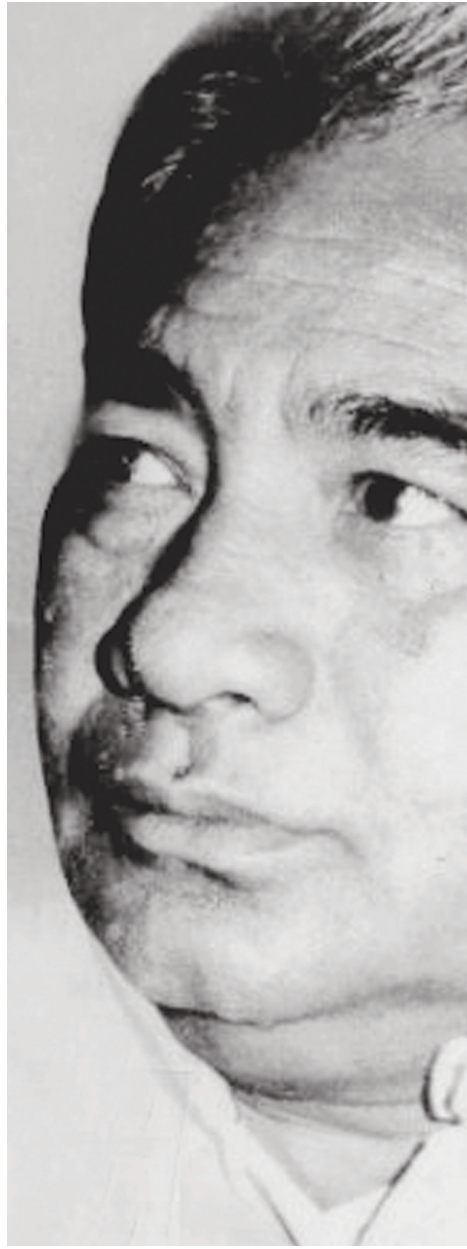
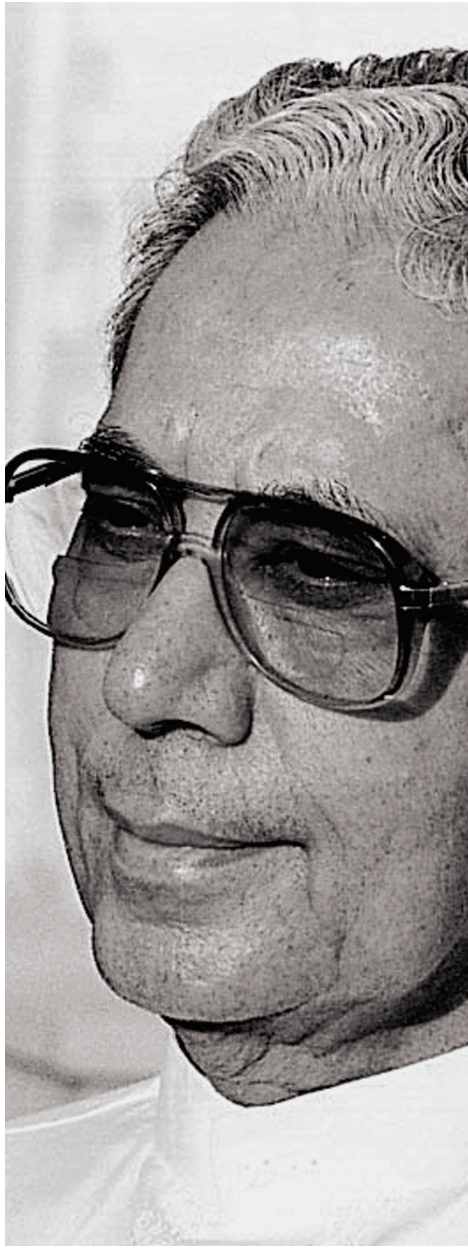
Even as issues of rights become more challenging, the centre of response has shifted from parliament to judiciary. Today, the superior judiciary seems more cognizant of violation of citizens’ rights than the elected representatives. In contrast to the positive legislation enacted by the National Assembly elected in 2008, the subsequent two assemblies enacted little rights-based laws.

As rights groups struggle to respond to violations, there is the stark realisation that their work will become more challenging as Pakistan becomes more and more of a security state, rather than a democratic one.

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THE SLOW DEATH OF CRITICAL THINKING

Despite a rapid increase in the number of universities, the quality of Pakistan's intellectual output has largely remained dismal, writes DR SYED JAFFAR AHMED. The space for dissenting opinions from the intelligentsia is shrinking, dimming the hopes of succeeding generations.



Photos: Dawn Archives

All gone ... Eqbal Ahmed (from left), Hamza Alavi, Sibte Hasan, I.H. Qureshi and Saleem Ahmed in many ways represented the best of Pakistani intellect.

HE importance of intelligentsia in a country cannot be overstated. Intellectuals, by virtue of their role, often become the identity markers of their respective countries. They are listened to across society. They also emerge as the standard-bearers of a nation's truths to the rest of the world. Societies, in the course of their evolution, draw heavily from the ideas and thoughts of their intellectuals.

Included in the intelligentsia's role is the understanding of forces that progressively affect the process of change. The intelligentsia forms the critical mass of a society and serves as a catalytic force in the phenomenon of social change. Societies look towards them for guidance during periods of turmoil. They generally face the social and political establishments' ire, but courageously continue to question the status quo.

It must be said that all educated professionals do not necessarily fulfil the criteria of being considered 'intellectuals'. The latter are something more than the former. An intellectual is believed to have certain characteristics, like original and independent thinking, having a multidisciplinary knowledge base, having socially relevant ideas and perceptions, being connected to society, and if they are attached with an academic institution, their scholarship should go beyond classrooms and professional research writings, and, finally, they should be steadfast in the face of all social and political odds.

The United States is today regarded as a superpower with extraordinary capacity to impact smaller countries financially and militarily, but it is also known for the anti-establishment voice of Noam Chomsky. Apart from him, there have been Edward Said, Robert Fisk, Angela Davis and numerous others, who throughout history have remained a signpost for societies.

India today is known for its chauvinist shift towards Hindutva, which has made deep inroads into state and society, yet it also has intellectuals like Romilla Thapar, Irfan Habib, Amartya Sen and Arundhati Roy. England has had Eric Hobsbawm, E.P. Thompson, and a whole group of New Left thinkers. German-American thinker Herbert Marcuse became one of the major apostles of the students' revolts across the Atlantic in the campus uprisings of 1960s.

It is in this background that one is tempted to speculate if Pakistan has an intelligentsia worth speaking about. If yes, where is it, and what is its role? If not, why is it absent? Needless to say, we have never had a very strong tradition of meaningful and effective intellectual discourse. Whatever we had, seems to have depleted with time. Talking with reference to our universities, is it not paradoxical that their number has multiplied over the years, but their intellectual output has remained, at best, quite meagre?

In our history, a great deal of resistance came from fiction writers and poets. One could also include literary critics among this class. Other than Progressive critics, like Mumtaz Hussain and Mujtaba Hussain, there were those who favoured traditional narratives, like Muhammad Hasan Askari, M.D. Taseer, Mumtaz Shireen and Saleem Ahmed. It was a battle of ideas that was fought in the domain of literature.

We seldom had writers of note hailing from the social sciences, writing about Pakistani socio-historical realities and suggesting ways to take to the country out of its horizontal and vertical conflicts. Such an analysis and vision was never made available for political struggles, which by and large remained short-sighted and temporary, and failed to lead the country towards higher democratic goals.

The absence of socio-economic analysis compelled political movements to rely heavily on poetry to galvanise supporters, but this could not fulfil the objective these movements desperately sought to attain. Renowned sociologist Hamza Alavi opined that in the absence of critical social analysis, poetry tends to serve as opium: giving temporary solace and an ephemeral boost to the common people.

Alavi and others — like Eqbal Ahmed, Feroz Ahmed, Sagheer Ahmed, etc. who did write about the socio-economic realities of Pakistan and offered concrete solutions — were almost all based abroad: one reason, perhaps, why they were able to do what they did. Within the country, such work was not very visible, or even feasible.

Sibte Hasan was a scholar of note, who wrote not only about history and the evolution of civilisation in the Pakistani region and the Middle East, but also addressed some fundamental political and ideological issues, like the relationship between the state and religion, and the historical treatment of what was designated as an Islamic state.

Ali Abbas Jalalpuri dealt with philosophical, historical and political issues in a rational manner in his many books. Safdar Mir (Zeno) wrote extensively on cultural issues, highlighting the significance of the country's diverse cultures. Khawaja Masood was not only a profes-

sor of mathematics, but also a learned scholar of history, sociology and cultural affairs. His writings remained a source of guidance for about a quarter of a century. Ibrahim Joyo wrote in both English and Sindhi on the history of ideas and cultural transformations in history.

Moving on, Waris Mir took on the establishment on its authoritarian official narrative, particularly during Gen Ziaul Haq's martial law. I.A. Rahman had been a persistent writer and speaker on constitutional, political and human rights issues. Mubarak Ali highlighted the shortcomings of the official historiography and introduced to his readers the new and diverse dimensions of historiography, as these have been leading historians and researchers towards fresh conclusions in other countries. Shah Muhammad Marri has written extensively on Baloch history and other historical themes. His *Peoples' History of Balochistan*

The space for cultural evolution has progressively shrunk. Gone are the days when scholars and intellectuals from different schools of thought had an environment in which they could write and speak freely. A battle of ideas was there and thriving. The 'coffee house' culture was in many ways the nerve centre of the national intellect.

has been published in five volumes; others are in process. This list does not go much beyond these and certain other names. This indicates that we have a paucity of intellectuals and a limited intellectual tradition in the country.

The section of the intelligentsia that draws its prominence for being public scholars is even smaller. Those who can connect with society directly and speak on socioeconomic and political issues have greater influence, but also a more challenging task. They need to speak a language comprehensible to the people and have the communication skills to elucidate difficult themes for the masses. Sibte Hasan, Mubarak Ali, Qazi Javed, Hasan Zafar Arif, Ashfaq Saleem Mirza and Pervez Hoodbhoy have done this.

As to why our universities have produced such little intellectual output and so few intellectuals, a number of reasons can be cited. Public universities have worked under severe official control; their autonomy remains only on paper. The system of education, particularly higher education, is directly and effectively controlled by the central government: so much so that even the curriculum is devised officially. This leaves the majority of the faculty with no option, but to abide by the conditions imposed on it instead of exercising its independence and coming up with original ideas.

Moreover, the system is such that it does not allow a culture of research to take root and flourish. Years of this arrangement have resulted in a demeaning culture of self-censorship, and those who violate this are marked for their 'disobedience' by the authorities. It is very difficult for a genuine researcher to do a research that does not fall within the officially approved parameters, as it results in the denial of grants and research funds. If certain people still try to break the shackles and write and speak courageously, they do so while undergoing difficult trials.

In the past, a number of dissenting scholars were either expelled from universities or were elbowed out. This happened more during Zia's military rule, when teachers were expelled from the Quaid-i-Azam, Punjab and Karachi universities. As a result of the near death of any real culture of critical inquiry and research, while anti-establishment scholarship seems to have come to an end, even traditional and official narratives no longer find professional scholars to sustain themselves. We do not see the likes of, say, I.H. Qureshi in our history departments anymore. Whatever views he had regarding the creation of the country and his overall subjective historiography, he wrote as a trained historian. He was professional in his approach and sincere in his research even if some find his interpretations confused and conclusions flawed.

A cursory glance at the last 75 years is sufficient to shed light on the fact that the space for cultural evolution in the country has progressively shrunk. In its first and second decades, scholars and intellectuals belonging to different schools of thinking had at least been given an environment in which they could write and speak freely about what they thought, and could also get into debates with each other. A battle of ideas was there and thriving. The 'coffee house' culture was alive and the Pak Tea House in Lahore was in many ways the nerve centre of the national intellect.

With social media still decades away, it was the national press that carried debates. The trend was alive even in the 1970s and the 1980s. One could see debates between Zeno and Mohammad Ali Siddiqui (Ariel) on one side, and Saleem Ahmed on the other. On serious sociological and historic issues, too, debate was possible. In 1973, a debate on the subject of feudalism in Muslim history between Marxist writer Sibte Hasan and an authority on Islamic history, Professor Qamaruddin Khan, was carried by *Dawn* in its *Sunday Magazine*.

Similarly, in 1976, *Dawn* carried another debate on secularism between Sibte Hasan and Advocate Khalid Ishaq, an expert on Islamic law and jurisprudence. While the former highlighted the need for it, the latter thought there was no need in a country like Pakistan. The debate continued in the *Sunday Magazine* for weeks, and flowed over to the Letters to the Editor (LTE) columns where the lay readers had their say on the subject. Such serious debates receded gradually from the print media. All this activity was, linguistically decent and intellectually cerebral. Now, under the hardships caused by successive governments as well as growing intolerance in society, newspapers do not dare cover subjects of national significance. We do it all on Twitter probably because it doesn't demand intellectual depth and a sense of history. It does not even demand linguistic capacity.

In a nutshell, social media has replaced professional media, shops have replaced coffee houses, and malls have replaced theatres. There is no dialogue, no debate worth its while. The cultural spaces left provide very little room for ideas that may at some point lead to an exchange of ideas by engaging the contesting points of view.

Anybody with even a rudimentary sense of history would know the worth of critical scholarship and a genuine intelligentsia in a society. But, then, history itself tells us that regardless of the difficulties in its way, it is the very function of the intelligentsia to find space for itself, come up with original, critical ideas, and connect with society. That being so, the ball is definitely in the court of the intelligentsia to rise up to the challenge instead of merely lamenting the adverse circumstances.

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